South Haven Tribune

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November 2, 2025

Don Campbell / HP staff

Bruce Bentsen is pictured in the St. Joseph neighborhood along Thayer Avenue where he and his brother, Tom Bentsen, grew up. Tom Bentsen was among the crew who lost their lives with the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

The legend lives on 50 years later

Edmund Fitzgerald sinking carries waves of memories

By JULIE SWIDWA
For the Tribune

Tim Carlin and Bruce Bentsen have never met.

But, unbeknownst to both of them until recently, they share a special bond.

Bruce is the younger brother of Tom Bentsen, and Carlin was one of Tom's best friends. As a merchant marine from 1969 to 1973, Carlin sailed many times with Tom, who at the time was a merchant marine cadet. Carlin said he worked on the decks of ships while Tom Bentsen worked below deck in the engine room. While they rarely spent time together aboard the ships, they often would meet up when the ships were docked.

"He was a dear friend. We shared a love of music," Carlin, now 74, recalled in a phone interview from his home in Toledo, Ohio.

That all ended on Nov. 10, 1975, when the Edmund Fitzgerald sank, and all 29 crew members were lost.

Among them was Tom Bentsen, 23, a St. Joseph native.

His younger brother, Bruce, recalls he was in the midst of an art project at St. Joseph High School when he looked up and saw his dad in the classroom doorway, talking to the teacher.

The news was grim. Tom's ship had gone down in Lake Superior.

Some of the crewmen's belongings had been found in Lake Superior. As the U.S. Coast Guard continued to comb the waters for the missing freighter and crew, loved ones were notified that the sailors were lost. The Fitzgerald was believed to have gone down in about 350 feet of water some 12 miles north of a lighthouse on Whitefish Point and about eight miles due west of Coppermino Point on the Canadian Shore.

Bruce Bentsen, who was 15 at the time, was eight years younger than Tom, so his memories of his brother are somewhat dim.

"I remember he was always into music. He played the stand-up bass, and was always jamming with his friends. I remember growing up on Thayer Drive. They were jamming in the basement on a regular basis, while I was outside on my bicycle with the neighborhood kids, like Jeff Buller from across the street," Bruce said. "Tom was usually with his friends, and I was with mine."

The Edmund Fitzgerald, then the biggest freighter on the Great Lakes, was the largest ever to sink.

Photo provided / University of Wisconsin-Superior

Edmund Fitzgerald is photographed in the Duluth Ship Canal.

Photo provided / Greenmars, Wikimedia Commons

The Edmund Fitzgerald is pictured in 1971. On Nov. 10, 1975, the Edmund Fitzgerald sank and all 29 crew members were lost. Among them was Tom Bentsen, 23, a St. Joseph native.

A voyage cut short

According to museum archives, the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald was conceived as

See FITZGERALD, page A6

'He made you smile'

Classmates share stories of SJ man who was on Edmund Fitzgerald

By JULIE SWIDWA
For the Tribune

BENTSEN

ST. JOSEPH — It's been nearly 50 years since the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald, but classmates of the St. Joseph man who died in the wreck still remember him.

David Knight, a classmate of Tom Bentsen's, can recall them walking home from school together from time to time. Knight grew up on Willa Avenue in St. Joseph, while Bentsen grew up a block away on Thayer.

"I remember one time a bunch of us were walking home and we were throwing snowballs at Tom. Ten or 15 minutes later, there's a knock at our door and it was his mother, coming over to complain that we were picking on her little boy," Knight said. "He always seemed quiet, he loved the arts, and he was just always smiling. He always seemed to me like such a happy guy. Just being around him, he made you smile."

Knight said he was driving back from California in August of 1976, where he had just passed Salt Lake City on I-80 when he heard the song "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" on the radio for the first time.

"It absolutely stunned me. I had to pull over. I was so moved by Gordon Lightfoot's song I cried, a lot. I was in this beautiful part of Utah with the mountains around me and even some waterfalls and here is this song about a friend who lost his life so tragically," Knight said. "Tom was so young, and he was such a good person. It's hard to understand."

Knight said he visited the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum earlier this year and met Executive Director Bruce Lynn.

"I mentioned that I was a high school classmate of Tom Bentsen and shared a few stories about him," Knight said. "He was intrigued, and asked if any other classmates would like to share their stories about Tom."

In advance of the 50th year memorial, Knight reached out to members of the St. Joseph High School Class of 1970, asking them to share their memories of Bentsen. With their consent, he shared those with The Herald-Palladium.

"I'm so glad Tom is being remembered, as this is such a tragic end to a wonderful person," Knight said.

Bentsen remembered

Here are reflections from his classmates:

"Tom was always quiet, but he was a really good friend. Sometimes when I was skiing with ski club from WMU (Western Michigan University), he would meet me at the slopes if he was near that area. He didn't ski, but we just sat and talked a lot."

– Jill Konrath-Wilke

"Tom was in a few of my classes and he was a kind and sweet young man – and maybe a little shy as I talked to everyone. I didn't see him outside of school, but that's what I remember."

– Jan Kirkdorfer-Nelson

"Tom Benson was not only a classmate, but my neighbor. We both lived on Thayer Drive, a few blocks apart. We were also both members of the high school ski club.

See BENTSEN, page A2

More Information

What: Gordon Lightfoot's 1976 folk ballad told the true story of a shipwreck on Lake Superior.

Song: The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

Release: 1976

Electric transmission upgrades scheduled in South Haven

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The City of South Haven's electric transmission provider, AEP Transmission, in coordination with Indiana Michigan Power, will perform power-supply transmission upgrades this fall.

According to a news release, there are no scheduled outages for South Haven customers as part of this work. However, over the next seven weeks, transmission supply may be affected by construction.

The city's electric department is coordinating closely with AEP and is prepared to respond to any unexpected outages.

"If an unplanned event occurs – such as a car-pole accident or a storm – there is an increased risk that larger than normal areas could be impacted while the electric system is temporarily reconfigured for construction," the release stated.

Typical repair times are expected to remain the same. This work is part of the Hartford Area Improvement Project, which strengthens the electric transmission network in Southwest Michigan.

"The project will rebuild approximately 18 miles of 69-kV transmission between Hartford, Bangor and South Haven," the release stated.

The project strengthens the electric transmission system by replacing deteriorating wooden poles from the 1950s with modern steel poles.

The existing transmission line has experienced more than 20 outages since 2015 and requires frequent maintenance in its current condition.

"The project improves the line's operational performance, reduces the likelihood of extended power outages and enhances electric reliability for area customers," the release stated.

For questions, contact Electric Superintendent Chris May at South Haven's Department of Public Works at 269-637-0737.

The Tribune: Celebrating Our 126th Year

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stand in the wind

Dear editor,

I am proud to endorse Mary Hosley for mayor of South Haven, and Lisa Krupiarz for South Haven City Council, Ward 1. Mary and Lisa will be tuned in to the views and needs of the residents while moving our city forward with an economic development plan to grow our year-round population, increase school enrollment and support more health care services.

Mary Hosley has demonstrated to me her integrity, her impartial search for and understanding of the facts in our city documents so that her decisions are soundly based.

Mary demonstrates the ability to "stand in the wind" as she faces challenges to her position supporting residents. In her response, she takes the high road, modeling civility. Mary stands for progress achieved within the rules that have been enacted here in South Haven to support the residents.

As a Ward 1 resident and as someone who has attended or watched city council meetings, I feel certain that Lisa Krupiarz as a council member will continue to pursue the facts and to apply the rules with energy and an eye for positive growth for South Haven to include affordable housing. She knows our Ward 1 and its needs and has shown years of interest and involvement with the Ward 1 Action Committee and Seed of Hope scholarship program.

South Haven can move forward with leaders like Mary and Lisa. I urge you to vote for Mary Hosley for mayor and Lisa Krupiarz for Ward 1.

Mary Moore
South Haven

Restore heart to city hall

Dear editor,

Mary Hosley, city council member, is running for mayor of South Haven to "restore heart to city hall – civility that unites us, accountability that rebuilds trust and respect that lifts every single resident."

At the city council meeting on Jan. 16, 2024, the mayor called fellow members "cowardly" and "conniving." The mayor falsely accused members of "blindsiding" the public with a "hidden agenda" and of a "lack of transparency." The mayor went on to accuse city council members of "dishonesty." Mary Hosley is interested in "restoring civility and respect" to city hall. Mary's "top priority is transparency" followed by "fairness and accountability to the city."

At the city council meeting on Jan. 2, 2025, the mayor falsely accused Mary Hosley of incorporating sexually explicit terms into the STR amendments. The mayor insisted on reading the sexually explicit terms, ignoring repeated points of order, and offended the LGBTQ community. Mary Hosley will "bring integrity back to city hall." Mary will continue to encourage "efficient meetings with civil discussions."

"Every voice matters." It is time for a change. Vote Mary Hosley for mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Patricia Sheppard
South Haven

Building a strong community

Dear editor,

We have lived in South Haven for more than 25 years and often remind ourselves how fortunate we are to call this community home. Among the many people who have contributed greatly to making South Haven such a special place are Annie Brown and Jeff Filbrandt.

Annie is deeply involved in numerous organizations and activities that enrich our community, and she works tirelessly to promote them. We especially appreciate her regular postings of local job opportunities and her steadfast support of our public schools. She can be found at nearly every school event, cheering for students and supporting teachers and staff.

As mayor, Annie has faced a number of challenges with a sometimes contentious council, yet she continues to lead with courage and dedication. We applaud her commitment to serving South Haven and addressing problems head-on.

Our hope is that this election brings a council that will work cooperatively with Annie as mayor – one that puts differences aside and focuses on what unites us. Together, we can continue building the strong, caring community we all treasure.

Wes and Elaine Stephens
South Haven

Leadership qualities

Dear editor,

As an experienced city council member for eight years, and a successful business owner for 25 years, I know what qualities a good leader possesses and the impact a good leader has on those around him/her. Mary is an excellent leader. She is honest and has integrity along with the courage to pursue her convictions. Her driving force is to always do what is best for the residents and the entire city. She does not get deterred when there are some powerful interests in opposition.

Powerful people have mischaracterized Mary and hope to fool the residents. Hopefully the residents can see through this deception and will give their votes to a mayor that really will work in their interests.

Mary has been a productive member of city council and steered the council toward passing resolutions that improve the quality of life in South Haven. Mary has created a coalition in the city council that inspires its members to be confident and successful. She would be a true mayor for the people. Mary actively listens and seeks feedback from all the sectors of the city of South Haven. She does thorough research on all issues relevant to the city. She will only make a proposal if she has the facts to substantiate her statements.

Mary is always civil to everyone she communicates with, even if that person is in opposition to her beliefs and her goals. She believes in treating everyone with dignity and respect. She strikes a balance between compromise to include all perspectives but will not dilute her proposal to the point that it is no longer meaningful.

Our current mayor, Annie Brown, has a totally different agenda and does not work for the well-being of all the residents in South Haven. She does not listen to the residents or ask for feedback, especially at city council meetings. She is inflexible as shown by her continuing to stand by her original proposal no matter what has been presented by council members or residents at the meetings. She is not open to compromise. Annie Brown treats people disrespectfully if she disagrees with them.

The mayor's poor leadership has caused a lot of drama and resentfulness. For example, the Jan. 16, 2024 city council meeting, where she personally attacked four other council members. This is the opposite of good leadership.

With Mary as mayor, our meetings will be shorter and kinder with the outcome favorable to our residents and small businesses. For these reasons, I ask you to join me in voting to elect Mary Hosley for mayor.

Joe Reeser
South Haven

OBITUARIES

Esperanza Serratos

April 11, 1942 – Oct. 18, 2025

Esperanza Serratos, age 83 of Bangor, Mich. went home to be with the Lord on Oct. 18, 2025, at Bronson Methodist Hospital, Kalamazoo, Mich. surrounded by her loving family.

She was born on April 11, 1942 in Tinguindin, Mexico, the daughter of the late Julia DuVerney and Jose Campos.

On her birthday, April 11, 1957 she married Rodolfo Serratos and the couple remained married for 52 years until his passing in 2009.

She was the owner and operator of La Mexicana Grocery Store from 1979 to 2003 in the city of Bangor, which she ran with her husband Rodolfo.

Margie, as she was affectionately known, was an active and dear member of Redemption church of Bangor and was deeply loved by her family. Her journey on this earth was one marked by love, compassion, growth and unwavering faith in God.

She is survived by her children, Rodolfo Serratos, Rosario Serratos, Lilia Arreola, Guillermo (Darlene) Serratos, and Arturo (Patricia) Serratos. Siblings; Yolanda DuVerney and Rosemary Mariscal; 11 grandchildren; 19 great grandchildren; one great-great grandchild and many close friends and extended family.

She is preceded in death by her husband of 52 years Rodolfo Serratos, her parents, and siblings Alfred DuVerney, Beatrice Salinas, Annie Salinas, Greg Campos and Emil DuVerney; grandchildren César Serratos and Azeem Green.

Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025 at Redemption Church OEC, 108 High Street, Bangor, MI, with Pastor John H. Saylor and Pastor Bryce Saylor officiating.

Burial will follow at Arlington Cemetery in Bangor with dinner at Redemption church to follow.

Christy Tragna

Christy Lynn Tragna, 79, of South Haven, Michigan, passed away peacefully at Resthaven in Holland, Mich. on Oct. 19, 2025.

Christy raised three beautiful daughters. She worked as a legal secretary most of her life; retiring from her favorite job at the prosecutor's office in the 7th District Courthouse.

She enjoyed the beach, playing softball, bowling, reading, watching golf and mystery movies, her dogs and especially spending time laying out in the sun.

Christy is survived by her ex husband and friend Joesph Tragna, sister, Allison Beckwith; her daughters, Kristen (Clint) Schultz and Karla (Mandy) Tragna; her niece, Arin (Lester) See; grandchildren, Trever, Zanita, Judah, and Lacey; and great-grandchildren, Sydney and Ace.

She was preceded in death by her daughter, Kimberly Tragna Robinson and her parents Charles Murray and Dorothy Murray.

Christy will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by her family and friends.

BENTSEN

From page A1

After my first year of college in Colorado, I returned home over Christmas and went for a drink with a friend of mine to Babe's, a local bar in Benton Harbor. I ran into Tom there who was wearing his pea coat indicating that he was in the Merchant Marines. We talked for a bit, and Tom explained that he had joined the Merchant Marines and was sailing the Great Lakes, delivering ore and other natural resources. At the time, I thought this was pretty cool and somewhat romantic, and I was somewhat envious that he was out in the world and making a living while I was still hitting the books with no definitive goal in sight. After the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, I think of Tom from time to time and our last conversation together. I wish I got to know him better."

– Eric Troff

"Tom was one of my closest friends. The last time I saw him was when he was on shore leave on Zug Island, near Detroit. I was still an undergraduate at Oakland University. We had a few beers in a bar, then said goodbye. For the last time."

– Bob Marquardt

Al-Van Humane Society
Adopt ♥ Volunteer ♥ Donate ♥ Advocate
73303 8th Ave. PO Box 421 South Haven, MI 49090
phone 269.637.5062 fax 269.639.2242
Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri 11 am to 5:30 pm; Sat 11 am to 3 pm; Wed, Sun Closed

Meet our Pets of the Week, The Long-Termers!

This week, we're shining a spotlight on some very special pets, our long-term residents who have been waiting over a year to find their forever homes. Each of these sweet souls has spent countless days watching new friends get adopted, patiently waiting for their turn to come.

Now, thanks to a generous donor, their moment could be now. Through the end of the month, adoption fees for all Al-Van pets have been completely covered during our Angel Adoption Event! That means you can open your heart and home to one of these amazing animals at no cost and give them the happy ending they've been waiting so long for.

Stop by the Adoption Center this week to meet our year-long residents and see if one of them might just be your perfect match. You can also learn more about each of them or submit an adoption survey at al-van.org/adopt. They've waited long enough. Be the hero of their story, don't let them wait another year to find their forever home.

Angel Adoption Event

We are so excited to once again be hosting an Angel Adoption event thanks to a generous donor. All adoption fees have been waived from October 16th until the end of the month. There's never been a better time to add a furry friend to your family!

THIS WEEK'S WISH LIST
Purina dry kitten food and Post-it Notes

Lest We Forget Patriotic Concert
"On Wings Like Eagles"
FREE
Mendel Center Jenkins Theater
Sunday - Nov 9, 2:00 p.m.
Southshore Concert Band Patriotic Tribute
Master of Ceremonies: Jeff Whitaker
Mendel Center
Veterans Stories – Books
Free Veteran Photos
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SH high school presents 'Ax of Murder' comedy

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven High School will present a comedic murder-mystery by Pat Cook for their fall production entitled "Ax of Murder."

According to a news release, the performances will take place at 7 p.m. on Nov. 7 and Nov. 8 at Listiak Auditorium.

There are haunted houses even a haunted theater, but now there is a haunted play.

"Could it be haunted by the spirit of a man who recently died at the theatre," the release stated. " No... it's not possible! That's what theater director Bonnie Bagwell tries to convince the other members of the troupe as writer Colin Chambers hints at the trail of horror that has cursed his script, Ax of Murder."

Curiosity gets the best of the actors and despite Chambers' adamant warnings, they open the script and start reading the play. It soon becomes apparent the play is mirroring their theater and even the specific actors.

"The play changes with each performance, Colin intones, though he's not taken seriously," the release stated. "But when a police sergeant shows up on cue, stating he was called in on a murder, people begin to wonder."

Wonder turns to fear when someone is murdered onstage and it seems as if no one could have done it.

"Nobody, that is, but perhaps a ghost," the release stated. "Beware the twists and turns of this play, you never know what will happen next when you see Ax of Murder."

Tickets are $5 for South Haven students and senior citizens and $8 for general admission.

Tickets will be available online starting Nov. 3 and at the door prior to each production.

Online orders can be placed at shpsmusicandtheater.ludus.com.

"With over thirty students involved in the cast and crew, you are bound to recognize a few faces," the release stated.

Photo provided

South Haven High School will present a comedic murder-mystery entitled "Ax of Murder" for the fall production.

FIRES STRIKE CASCO AND ARLINGTON TOWNSHIPS

South Haven Area Emergency Services, with assistance from Ganges and Lee township departments, recently battled a stubborn barn fire in Casco township.

Photos provided / Tom Renner

Two adult dogs and 19 mastiff puppies perished in a fire that destroyed an outbuilding on a property in Arlington Township on Sunday.

Maritime museum to host underground railroad lecture

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The Michigan Maritime Museum will host a special underground railroad lecture entitled "Freedom via Water! Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad on and near Lake Michigan" on Nov. 12.

According to a news release the lecture will take place at 6:30 p.m. and be presented by Dr. Larry McClellan.

"In this engaging program, Dr. McClellan explores the decades before the Civil War when hundreds of freedom seekers escaped enslavement in the South, traveling through Chicago and onward to Detroit and freedom in Canada," the release stated. "Using maps, images and first-hand stories, McClellan traces these courageous journeys across the Great Lakes, revealing how waterways like Lake Michigan and Lake Huron became routes to liberation."

The lecture highlights the development of freedom networks in northeastern Illinois and the role of both Black and white abolitionists who risked their safety to assist escapees.

"From the completion of the I&M Canal to the rise of the Chicago-Detroit rail connection, McClellan illustrates how transportation corridors opened new paths to freedom – and how biracial collaboration forged bonds that helped shape the movement against slavery," the release stated.

McClellan is Professor Emeritus at Governors State University and a leading historian of the Underground Railroad.

He is the author of "The Underground Railroad South of Chicago and Onward to Chicago: Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad in Northeastern Illinois," which received the 2023 National Underground Railroad Free Press Memorial Prize and the 2024 Illinois State Historical Society Book Award.

McClellan currently serves as President of the Midwest Underground Railroad Network and on the Illinois Underground Railroad Task Force.

This event is part of the museum's 2025 Whispers Across the Water lecture series that celebrates minority contributions to Great Lakes maritime history.

This program is made possible by the Nielsen-Wells Grant Fund and Mike and Susan Smith.

Tickets are free for museum members and $10 for non-members. Doors open at 6 p.m.

SNAP benefits being withheld in November

Mosaic making sure the 'fridge will not go empty'

By LOUISE WREGE
For the Tribune

The state's announcement that federal SNAP benefits are being withheld until further notice is potentially worsening the hunger problem in Southwest Michigan.

"Even before this announcement, we had observed an increase in people utilizing our Feel Good Fridge Pantry," said Angel Crayton, chief operating officer at Mosaic CCDA in Benton Township. "Due to the increased cost of living, inflation in grocery costs and the uncertainty around this new announcement – are all contributing to a growing number of people relying on community resources like ours."

She said Mosaic's clients have significant anxiety concerning SNAP benefits being decreased or stopped completely.

"For the people who rely on SNAP, these benefits are not 'extra,'" she said. "They are a lifeline that allows them to make ends meet. People are sharing their immediate concerns with our staff and volunteers daily."

She said many people are worried about having to choose between buying food or paying their rent or other essential utilities.

Crayton said Mosaic's partnerships with Whirlpool Corp. and Feeding America West Michigan to provide the Feel Good Fridge Pantry, along with private donations, are more vital now than ever.

"I am not waiting for a solution. I am working with partners to mobilize one," she said. "Our commitment is simple: The fridge will not go empty."

She said her team is working to secure extra resources and emergency food.

"We are treating this as an immediate local food crisis, and we are challenging our networks to step up and to ensure that no one in Southwest Michigan goes hungry following this federal issue," Crayton said.

Ken Estelle, president and CEO of Feeding America West Michigan, said in August that cuts in federal aid have led to more people in Michigan seeking food.

At the same time, he said his agency's capability to provide food was diminished when the U.S. Department of Agriculture canceled 32 truckloads of food valued at $856,000 earlier this year.

In addition, he said the USDA canceled a local food agreement that allowed Feeding America to buy $1.3 million in food from small Michigan farms.

Oh SNAP

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is a federally funded program administered by the states that provide food benefits to low-income families.

Officials were already worried that SNAP benefits may be temporarily reduced due to the ongoing federal government shutdown.

On Thursday, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, which runs SNAP, directed the state "to hold November SNAP issuance and ongoing benefits until further notice."

"The impact of households losing SNAP benefits will be felt around the state," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director, in a news release Thursday. "SNAP is more than a food assistance program; it's a lifeline for many Michigan families. It helps families put nutritious food on the table, supports local farmers and grocers, and strengthens our communities and economy. We are strongly disappointed by the USDA's decision to delay this assistance, and in Michigan we will do what we can to help blunt this impact."

About 1.4 million people receive SNAP benefits in Michigan, with 43 percent families with children and 36 percent families with members who are older adults or disabled.

SNAP helps lift families out of poverty by allowing them to spend money that would otherwise have been used for food on other goods and services, including health-related activities, according to the release. A 2021 study showed infants and children in SNAP families are more likely to see a doctor for periodic check-ups. Additionally, older adults using SNAP are more likely to take the full dosage of prescription medications because they have enough income to afford food and medicine, compared to other older adults not participating in SNAP.

According to new economic analysis from the National Grocers Association, SNAP funding supports about 388,000 jobs, more than $20 billion in direct wages, resulting in over $4.5 billion in state and federal tax revenue.

By the numbers

The average SNAP household in Michigan received $335 in SNAP benefits per month, which is about $173 per person or $5.68 per person, per day.

To be eligible for SNAP in Michigan, applicants must be a U.S. citizen (or acceptable non-citizen status) and live in Michigan.

Of those receiving SNAP:

- 492,225 children benefit from SNAP.
- 38,513 veterans participating in SNAP.
- 36 percent SNAP households have older adults.
- 43 percent SNAP households have children.
- 51 percent households have a person with a disability.
- 78 percent of SNAP households include someone with earned income.

In Michigan, the more than 9,700 retailers that are part of the program redeemed over $3.6 million in SNAP.

Michigan Maritime Museum offers free monthly admission

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The Michigan Maritime Museum recently announced that visitors can enjoy free museum admission on the first Sunday of each month from November through April.

According to a news release, this special offer gives both residents and visitors the opportunity to explore the museum's exhibits and discover the rich maritime heritage of the Great Lakes region at no cost.

"We love opening our doors and making the Museum accessible to everyone," Executive Director of the Michigan Maritime Museum Bailey Sisoy-Moore said in the release. "Whether you're a longtime supporter or visiting for the first time, Free First Sundays are a great way to experience the stories, artifacts and spirit that make maritime history come alive."

Guests can explore the museum's indoor and outdoor galleries, featuring a mix of permanent and rotating exhibits that celebrate Michigan's maritime history.

"Step aboard the Full Steam Ahead exhibit and experience the golden age of steamship travel on the Great Lakes or discover the heroism and ingenuity of the U.S. Coast Guard Lifesaving Service," the release stated.

Guests can explore the museum's collection of antique and historically significant boats, some dating back to the 1800s.

"While at the Museum don't miss the chance to learn a classic sailor's skill by practicing mari-time knot tying in the Jerry Mason Learning Center," the release stated.

The Michigan Maritime Museum is located at 260 Dyckman Avenue in South Haven.

For more information, go to www.michiganmaritimemuseum.org or call 269-637-8078.

LEFT: South Haven's Angel Barajas collides with Fremont's Adam Kalika during Wednesday night's D3 state semifinal match in Cedar Springs. **RIGHT:** South Haven's August Zoet collides with Fremont's Remington Faulkner and keeper Caleb Vissia during Wednesday night's D3 state semifinal match in Cedar Springs. ***See more photos on www.SouthHavenTribune.net.***

Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Rams' stunning run

South Haven wins boys soccer state semifinal with dramatic late goal

By BEN SANDERS
HP Sports Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven entered the boys soccer postseason just hoping to win its district. Now the Rams are one win away from a Division 3 state championship.

Levi DeLaRosa scored a dramatic game-winning goal with less than three minutes left to give South Haven a 2-1 victory over previously unbeaten Fremont in Wednesday's state semifinal.

"This is hard to put into words, especially with that ending," South Haven coach Randy Bautista. "The last few games, it's been coming down to the last few minutes. Our boys have fought through and they've come up big time for us."

South Haven (18-4-4) will face Detroit Country Day (21-2-1) at 12:30 p.m. Saturday at Grand Ledge High School in the Division 3 state championship game.

"We're the underdogs, and now we're at state," DeLaRosa said. "It means so much more."

DeLaRosa scored the game-winner off an assist from Angel Barajas, shooting the ball from the right side into the top of the net.

"I had the ball on my foot, I just cut in, shot it, it was for the best," DeLaRosa. "I thank God it went in."

The game was scoreless at half-time, but the Rams got ahead just 28 seconds into the second half. DeLaRosa was fouled in the box, and Barajas netted the resulting penalty kick to give South Haven the lead.

"That was great timing for us," Bautista said. "Levi drove at them, made it difficult for the defender, he had to clip him to take him down. Then Angel was able to convert the PK."

Fremont (21-1-2) fought back, evening the score on an impressive long-range shot by Javon Basso that caromed in off the post with 27:51. Both teams had opportunities over the remainder of the half, but it was DeLaRosa and the Rams who ultimately found the winner.

"It just speaks to how they don't give up," Bautista said. "No matter what happens, we want to create, we want to push forward. We believe in ourselves and we want to play."

South Haven was seeded second in its district behind Fennville, who defeated the Rams 2-1 in the regular season. South Haven avenged the loss with a 1-0 win in the district title game and has continued finding ways to beat the odds.

"I didn't want to look too much ahead," Bautista said. "Once we came up with our district bracket, that was our goal. Our goal was to win districts, and then from there, whatever happens, happens."

South Haven has been to the Division 3 state championship game four times, claiming an unusual shared state title in 2003. Two of those four appearances ended in losses to Detroit Country Day, including their most recent trip in 2009, when Bautista was a player.

"When I was in high school we made a run, so I know what this means," Bautista said. "I know how it feels for the players. I'm glad they're able to experience it as well."

SOUTH HAVEN 2, FREMONT 1

Goals – South Haven: Angel Barajas, Levi DeLaRosa. Fremont: Javon Basso.
Assists – South Haven: Barajas.
Halftime – Tied 0-0.
Records – South Haven 18-4-4, Fremont 21-1-2.

Contact: bsanders@TheHP.com, 429-1294, Twitter: @HPBenSanders

Photo provided

The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed SaveryTech as a new chamber member with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

SaveryTech offers tech services for residents, businesses

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed SaveryTech as a new member with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

According to a news release, SaveryTech was founded by Scott Avery in March 2024 and born out of passion, perseverance and purpose.

"With more than 23 years of Information Systems experience, Scott turned his expertise into a business dedicated to helping residents and organizations navigate technology with confidence and care," the release stated.

Avery's career spans industries including healthcare, government, education, pharmaceuticals and corporate IT, with deep expertise in cybersecurity, systems engineering and network infrastructure.

Before launching SaveryTech, he served as Network and Infrastructure Engineer for Allegan County Government, leading major security and technology projects.

"A lifelong Southwest Michigan resident, Avery created SaveryTech as a way to give back to the communities that shaped him."

Based in Lawrence, SaveryTech offers a full range of residential and business technology services from PC and network support to cybersecurity, data protection and system design.

The company also has a SaveryTech Rescues program which refurbishes and repurposes technology to reduce e-waste and bridge the digital divide.

"Rooted in integrity, curiosity, and community, SaveryTech's mission is simple: to make technology secure, sustainable, and accessible – one system, one client, and one community at a time," the release stated.

For more information, go to www.saverytech.com, contact info@saverytech.com or call 616-613-6793.

SH welcomes Restorative Healing Haven LLC

By TRIBUNE STAFF

Photo provided

The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Restorative Healing Haven LLC as a new chamber member with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

SOUTH HAVEN — Restorative Healing Haven LLC was recently welcomed as a new member of the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce.

According to a news release, the chamber hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony with the founder of Restorative Healing Haven LLC Monica Munson.

"Restorative Healing Haven LLC offers trauma-informed, inclusive, and neurodivergent-friendly care that helps individuals reconnect with safety, balance and self-trust within their own bodies," the release stated.

The practice integrates a blend of evidence-based and spiritual modalities – including Root Cause Therapy, Somatic Healing, Reiki and Sound Healing – to support clients on their personal healing journeys.

Restorative Healing Haven has evolved over the past six years as Munson's practice and credentials have expanded.

"Forming the LLC allowed the practice to prioritize both client and practitioner well-being while maintaining accessibility and a small, intentional structure designed for sustainable healing work," the release stated.

What began as trauma-informed life coaching has grown to include advanced somatic training, Reiki Master certification and sound healing.

"Being part of the South Haven community means so much to me," Munson said in the release. "This area naturally draws people seeking peace and rest, and I love being part of that energy – offering accessible ways for locals and visitors alike to relax, heal and reconnect."

Monica offers mind-body trauma healing sessions in-person or via telehealth, Reiki energy healing in-person or at a distance, sound healing and group events, and customizable corporate and community wellness offerings.

All services are complementary to psychotherapy and designed to work alongside traditional mental health care for deeper, lasting healing.

"The chamber is excited to welcome Restorative Healing Haven LLC to its growing network of local businesses and wellness professionals," the release stated.

For more information about Restorative Healing Haven LLC, go to www.restorativehealinghaven.com.

Robert Copping of SH receives lifetime achievement award

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Community Service Commission recently announced 13 individuals, including South Haven resident Robert Copping, who will be honored at the 2025 Governor's Service Awards.

According to a news release, the Governor's Service Awards will take place on Nov. 12 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing and will honor individuals, businesses and nonprofit organizations for their commitment to volunteerism, service or philanthropy.

"At the Governor's Service Awards, we get to honor admirable Michiganders who have given their time, talent and treasures to help others and make our state a better place," Whitmer said in the release. "They step up for others and work hard to uplift our communities even when nobody's looking because they know every contribution makes an impact. They have set an example for all of us to follow."

The Governor's Service Awards have been presented since 1994.

"I encourage every Michigander to draw from their stories and volunteer to make life a little better for those around them," Whitmer said in the release. "Let's keep rolling up our sleeves to help our neighbors and build a Michigan we can all be proud of."

The Michigan Community Service Commission supports Michigan volunteers, organizations and businesses that are committed to service and play a critical role in improving the lives of our people and communities.

"The Award ceremony will be an intimate evening to celebrate the power of volunteerism," Michigan Community Service Commission Executive Director Ginna Holmes said in the release. "The level of selfless giving these Michiganders show should be an inspiration to us all. We are excited to tell their stories and show their passion to make a difference."

The winners include:

■ Governor George Romney Lifetime Achievement Award: Robert Copping (South Haven)

■ Corporate Social Impact Award: Domino's Pizza (Ann Arbor)

■ Excellence in Philanthropy: Otsego Community Foundation (Gaylord)

■ Older Adult Volunteer of the Year: John Richard Saxton (Blissfield)

■ Volunteer of the Year: Diana K. Deese (Saginaw), Judy Paulsen (Hartland)

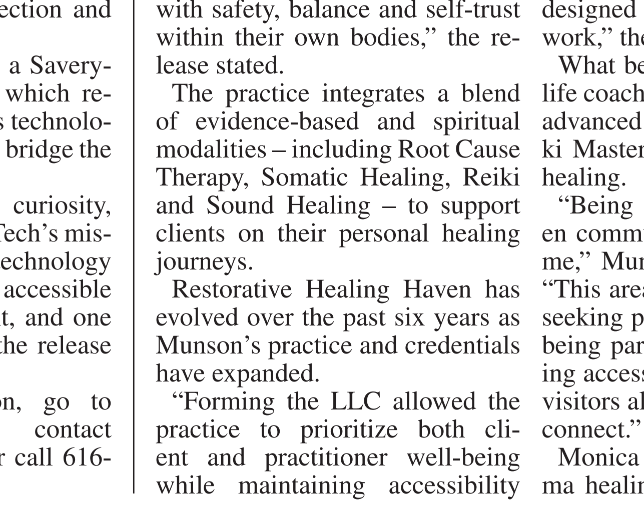

Photo provided / Tom Renner

Robert Copping founded the organization SHOUT for South Haven 30 years ago which has funded projects including the winter fireplace gathering place in Dyckman Park.

■ Outstanding National Service Impact Award: Larry Friday (Norton Shores), BreAnna Lockhart (Detroit)

■ Youth Impact Award: Sue Schooner (Ann Arbor), Student Leader Fellowship Program (Marquette)

■ Youth Volunteer of the Year: Isabelle Bigelow (Livonia), Manya Tijoriwala (Canton)

■ Community Impact Award: NorthWest Initiative (Lansing)

"Robert (Bob) Copping of South Haven has dedicated decades of his 93 years of life to making a difference in his community, state, nation, and world," the release stated.

Copping's life was impacted by the Great Depression during his younger years in Petoskey, living on the family farm. He volunteered with the U.S. Army and was stationed in Europe, where at the age of 28, he was responsible for transportation for a depot in Germany.

After graduating with his master's degree in business administration from Michigan State University, he had a long professional career in financial management internationally.

A worldview offered Copping and his wife Jane an awareness of needs that existed beyond Michigan, and upon retirement at the age of 60, he served with the International Executive Service Corps in Slovakia.

Upon their return to the United States, Jane and Bob decided to replant their Michigan roots and settle in South Haven.

"They vowed to follow the philosophy of author David Brooks: define a joyous life of meaning and purpose – notably for their community," the release stated. "Bob strongly believes that when you are young, the focus is to be with your family and build your resume, but in the last part of your life, you should complete the picture by giving back to the community through service."

Copping has supported the South Haven community in various way, including founding the organization SHOUT for South Haven 30 years ago.

"The civic-minded SHOUT group engages in a way that initiates new paths in the community," The release stated.

The group has funded thousands of dollars in private contributions in projects such as bridge flowers, downtown sculptures, SHOUT park, the Wilhelm Baum tugboat, signature street clocks, beach benches and the winter fireplace gathering place in Dyckman Park.

"The positive impact of Mr. Copping's work is tangible and far-reaching, and he continues to serve as a role model in our community," Mayor of South Haven Annie Brown said in the release. "He embodies the values of education, excellence, and service that this honor seeks to recognize."

SHOUT was the inspiration for the creation of the summer waterfront concerts, the cottage walk, performance series, theatre series and speaker series.

"Bob's leadership and positive vision for South Haven has left a trail for future generations of community leaders to take up the mantle and make our state an even greater place to start a career, raise a family and enjoy retirement," the release stated.

State Senator of District 20 Aric Nesbitt said in the release that Copping's commitment extends beyond his achievements.

"At 93 years old, he continues to inspire those around him with passion, wit, and unshakeable belief in the power of community," Nesbitt said in the release. "His unique ability to merge vision with practical action has left a legacy that will benefit South Haven for generations."

South Haven Tribune

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VAN BUREN COUNTY
PROBATE COURT

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. 2025-1171-DE

Estate of Judith Mae Kolman

Date of Birth: 12/05/1943

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Judith Mae Kolman, died July 4, 2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Tammy S. Maginot, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw St., Suite 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Attorney Name:
Shawn P. Ryan, P47249
220 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 100
South Bend, IN 46601
574-289-0909

Date: October 17, 2025

Personal Representative:
Tammy S. Maginot
1030 Autumn Lakes Circle, Unit 1B
Mishawaka, IN 46544
574-339-9492

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SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Zoning Board of Appeals of South Haven Charter Township will hold a public hearing and regular meeting at the South Haven Township Hall 09761 Blue Star Hwy on Monday November 17, 2025, 6:30pm for the following variance applications:

Sand Haven Shores Cottages LLC has petitioned for variances to construct homes and detached garages at 78006 20th Ave, 78000 20th Ave, and 78268 20th Ave.

1. 78006 20th Ave; House - Required front setback 35ft; request 15ft of relief (to be 20ft from front property line). Required rear setback is 50ft; request 14.5ft of relief (to be 35'6" from rear property line). Required side yard is 15ft; request 4.5ft of relief (to be 10'6" from west side property line). Detached garage – Required rear setback 15ft; request 1ft of relief (to be 14ft from rear property line).

2. 78000 20th Ave; House – Required rear setback 50ft; request 30ft of relief (to be 20ft rear property line); Detached garage – Required front setback 35ft; request 23ft of relief (to be 12ft from front property line).

3. 78268 20th Ave, House – Required front setback 35ft; request 23ft of relief (to be 12ft from front property line).

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the application can be reviewed at the Township Hall during the zoning administrator hours Tues's 9-12p and Thurs's 1:30-4p or call 269-637-3305 / 1-800-626-5964 or request by email shtwp.zoninga@gmail.com. Written comment may also be submitted to the zoning administrator.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that written comments may be submitted to the Township Clerk at the address set forth below, during regular business hours of regular business days or by mail at the address set forth below, up to the date of the hearing and will also be accepted by the Planning Commission at the hearing.

South Haven Charter Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon seven (7) days' notice to the South Haven Charter Township Clerk.

South Haven Charter Township Hall
Brenda Bertorelli, Clerk
09761 Blue Star Highway, South Haven, MI 49090 ph: 269-637-3305

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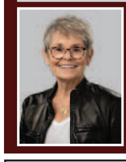

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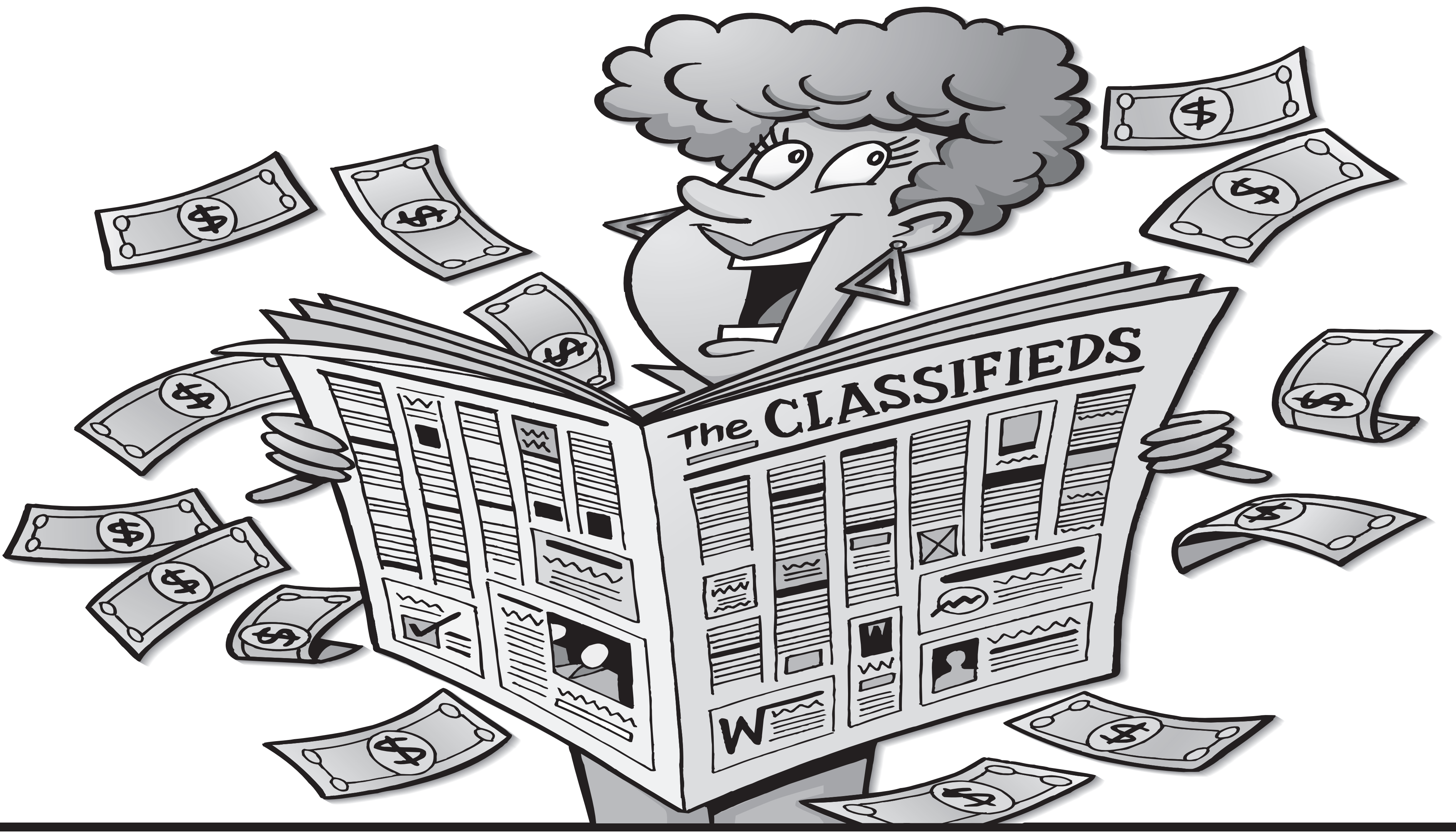

SOUTH HAVEN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Ongoing events

Visually impaired and blind persons support group meeting: Every third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. at Senior Services of Van Buren County.

Dementia and Alzheimer's caregivers support group meeting: Every third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church library.

Three Blondes Brewing: Trivia night on Thursdays at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

Sparkle and Spice Boutique: Mom and Me play date. Fridays from 9-10 a.m.

South Haven Center for the Arts: Center Studio for adults from 6-8 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Artists of any level can bring their own projects to work on. Basic art supplies will be available. Attendees must be 18 years old and over. Members are free, non-members cost $5.

South Haven Center for the Arts: Center Studio for ages 9 to 13 from 4-5:30 p.m. every Wednesday. Young artists are invited to create art at their own pace with an instructor to help guide as needed. Free workshop but a $10 donation is suggested to help cover cost of supplies.

South Haven Center for the Arts: "Altered Consumerism" exhibition from Aug. 8 through Sept. 20.

Candlelight Yoga: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Epiphany. Cost is $15.

Food pantry: First Congregational Church open from 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It is a drive-up food pantry.

Food pantry: Sacred Heart Catholic Church. For Bangor residents only. Open from 1-4 p.m. on Thursdays.

Food, clothing, baby pantry: Lily of the Valley Church in Covert. Open from noon to 2 p.m. on Wednesdays. Must call the central office to register.

Personal care and clothing pantry: First Assembly of God open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. Must call the central office to register.

Food pantry: Peace Lutheran Church open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Must call the central office to register.

Baby pantry: Simpson United Methodist Church in Bangor. Open from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays. Must call the central office to register.

South Haven Memorial Library: Story Time on 11 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays.

South Haven Farm Market: Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. through October at Huron Street Pavilion.

HawksHead: Pasta on the Patio every Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Michigan Maritime Museum: Hands-on the Harbor every Thursday at 10:30 a.m.

Lake Arvesta: Summer at the pasture concert every Friday and Saturday at 6 p.m.

Photo provided / Tom Renner

The one million gallon water tank was recently raised to the top of a 160-foot tall concrete pedestal. The tank features a wrap-around mural promoting South Haven's historic lighthouse.

Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum: New Exhibit – "The Adventures of Liberty Hyde Bailey – Chicago: 1872." Available during museum hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

Lakeside Social Bowling Alley: Glow Bowl every Friday from noon to 9 p.m.

Bridge – Chicago Scoring: noon on Tuesdays. Lakeside Entertainment, 9921 Blue Star Memorial Highway, South Haven.

Bridge – Duplicate Scoring: 1 pm on Wednesdays. Lakeside Entertainment, 9921 Blue Star Memorial Highway, South Haven.

South Haven Center for the Arts: "The Ghost that Linger" art exhibition available through Nov. 8.

South Haven Memorial Library: Autumn Painting Contest from Oct. 20 to Nov. 10. Participants can pick up a mini canvas from the library and paint, sketch or color something for fall or Thanksgiving related, featuring either books or the library. Painting need to be dropped of by Nov. 10. The pubic can vote on the painting from Nov. 17 to 24.

Michigan Maritime Museum: free admission on the first Sunday of every month from November through April.

November

3 – South Haven Memorial Library: Author event featuring Erica "Marie LaPres" Emelander presenting the art of researching and writing historical novels. Event begins at 6 p.m.

3 – Overton Public Engagement meeting: Topic focus is on building and home design feedback. From noon to 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Resurrection Life Ministries Church, 322 Elkenburg Street, South Haven.

4 – Rotary Club: South Haven Rotarian Don Meyer will present on health economics.

5 – South Haven Memorial Library: Friends of the South Haven Memorial Library annual meeting from 5 to 6 p.m.

5 – South Haven Memorial Library: Music and Movement at 11 a.m.

7 – South Haven Memorial Library: Play-doh play date at 11 a.m.

10 – South Haven Garden Club: Club giving auction at First Congregational Church.

10 – South Haven Memorial Library: Astronomy Club for adults from 6 to 7 p.m.

12 – South Haven Memorial Library: Hooked on Yarn from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

12 – Michigan Maritime Museum: "Freedom via Water! Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad on and near Lake Michigan" lecture presented by Dr. Larry McClellan at 6:30 p.m.

17 – Overton Public Engagement meeting: Topic focus is on final design and next steps. From noon to 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Resurrection Life Ministries Church, 322 Elkenburg Street, South Haven.

18 – Rotary Club: Evening meeting at the American Legion beginning at 5 p.m. Todd Marcy, Senior Director of Digital Operations for the Detroit Lions will present and Larry Wittkop is the program chair.

21 – South Haven Memorial Library: Messy Play for preschoolers from 11 a.m. to noon.

22 – Storytellers Senior Readers Theater: The Christmas Gathering at 7 p.m. at Senior Services of Van Buren County. Tickets are $10.

22 – First Congregational Church: Annual Holiday Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Featuring the Al-Van Humane Society cookie caper and garden crafts and fresh greens from the South Haven Garden Club.

23 – Storytellers Senior Readers Theater: The Christmas Gathering at 3 p.m. at Senior Services of Van Buren County. Tickets are $10.

25 – Rotary Club: Mike Sawyer, will present on the Senior Ramp Program of Van Buren County and Brian Kurtz is the program chair.

26 – South Haven Memorial Library: Hooked on Yarn from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

28 – South Haven Memorial Library: South Haven Writers read-around, new writers welcome from 1 to 4 p.m.

FITZGERALD

From page A1

a business enterprise of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee, Wis. Northwestern Mutual contracted with Great Lakes Engineering Works of Ecorse, Mich., to construct a "maximum sized" Great Lakes bulk carrier. Her keel was laid on Aug. 7, 1957 as Hull No. 301.

Named after the president and chairman of the board of Northwestern Mutual, Fitzgerald was first launched June 8, 1958 at River Rouge, Mich. Northwestern Mutual placed her under permanent charter to the Columbia Transportation Division of Oglebay Norton Company, Cleveland, Ohio. At 729 feet and 13,632 gross tons, she was the largest ship on the Great Lakes for 13 years, until 1971.

The Fitzgerald's normal course took her between Silver Bay, Minn., where she loaded taconite (iron ore), to be delivered to steel mills on the lower lakes in the Detroit and Toledo area. She was usually empty on her return trip to Silver Bay. On Nov. 9, 1975, the ship was to transport a load of taconite from Superior, Wis., to Zug Island, Detroit, Mich.

The final voyage of the Edmund Fitzgerald began Nov. 9, 1975, at the Burlington Northern Railroad Dock No. 1, Superior, Wis. Captain Ernest M. McSorley had loaded her with 26,116 long tons of taconite pellets, made of processed iron ore, heated and rolled into marble-size balls. Departing Superior about 2:30 p.m., she was soon joined by the Arthur M. Anderson, which had departed Two Harbors, Minn., under Captain Bernie Cooper. The two ships were in radio contact. The Fitzgerald being the faster took the lead, with the distance between the vessels ranging from 10 to 15 miles.

Aware of a building storm entering the Great Lakes from the great plains, Captain McSorley and Captain Cooper agreed to take the northerly course across Lake Superior, where they would be protected by highlands on the Canadian shore. This took them between Isle Royale and the Keweenaw Peninsula. They would later make a turn to the southeast to reach the shelter of Whitefish Point.

Weather conditions continued to deteriorate. Gale warnings had been issued at 7 p.m. on Nov. 9, upgraded to storm warnings early in the morning of Nov. 10. Conditions worsened, with winds gusting up to 50 knots and waves rising up to 12 to 16 feet.

The Fitzgerald was lost in Lake Superior Nov. 10, 1975, 17 miles northwest of Whitefish Point.

To this day, there is no conclusive evidence to determine the exact cause of the sinking.

Searching for answers

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society will hold a public remembrance service for the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald at Whitefish Point near Paradise, Mich, at 2 p.m. Nov. 10. Then, a private memorial for family members will be held at 7 p.m. that same day.

Carlin and Bruce Bentsen, now connected by phone calls and text messages, are both planning to be there. Further, they intend to meet up the night before the event to get to know one another better.

Carlin said he was driving to work the morning of Nov. 11, 1975, when an announcement came on the radio about a tragedy on Lake Superior. But it wasn't until 1978 at a museum in Ohio that he saw Tom Bentsen's name on the crew list. He said his heart sunk.

He has since visited the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum near Whitefish Point many times.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society (GLSHS) has conducted three underwater expeditions to the wreck in 1989, 1994 and 1995.

The Fitzgerald's 200-pound bronze bell was recovered on July 4, 1995. This expedition was conducted jointly with the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, National Geographic Society, Canadian Navy, Sony Corp. and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The bell is now on display in the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point as a memorial to the lost crew.

At the memorial ceremony next month, the bell will chime "29 times for each man on the Edmund Fitzgerald," as crooned in Gordon Lighfoot's ballad about the shipwreck. Carlin said he was unaware any relatives of Tom Bentsen would be attending, so he offered to ring the bell for him. When he learned of a surviving brother, he said, "I don't want to step on any toes."

Bruce Bentsen lives in Florida now, but has recently been in the St. Joseph area. He connected with Carlin by telephone and made their plans to meet up as the bell chimes for Tom.

Bruce said the last time he saw Tom, he was 15 and Tom was 23.

"My mom and I drove to Inland Steel in Gary, Ind., and we took him out to dinner, then took him back to his ship," Bruce recalled. "We grew up on Thayer Avenue in St. Joseph, and we did a lot as a family. Tom played bass violin in the school orchestra, and played electric bass guitar in a rock band. They would practice in our basement. He loved music and he had a huge record collection."

He said he and his wife, Cindi Bentsen, still have some of those records.

According to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum's archives, the legend of the Edmund Fitzgerald remains the most mysterious and controversial of all shipwreck tales heard around the Great Lakes, and her story is surpassed in books, film and media only by that of the Titanic.

Canadian folksinger Gordon Lightfoot inspired popular interest in the vessel with his 1976 ballad, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

Bruce Bentsen said he still gets "a little choked up" any time he hears the song.

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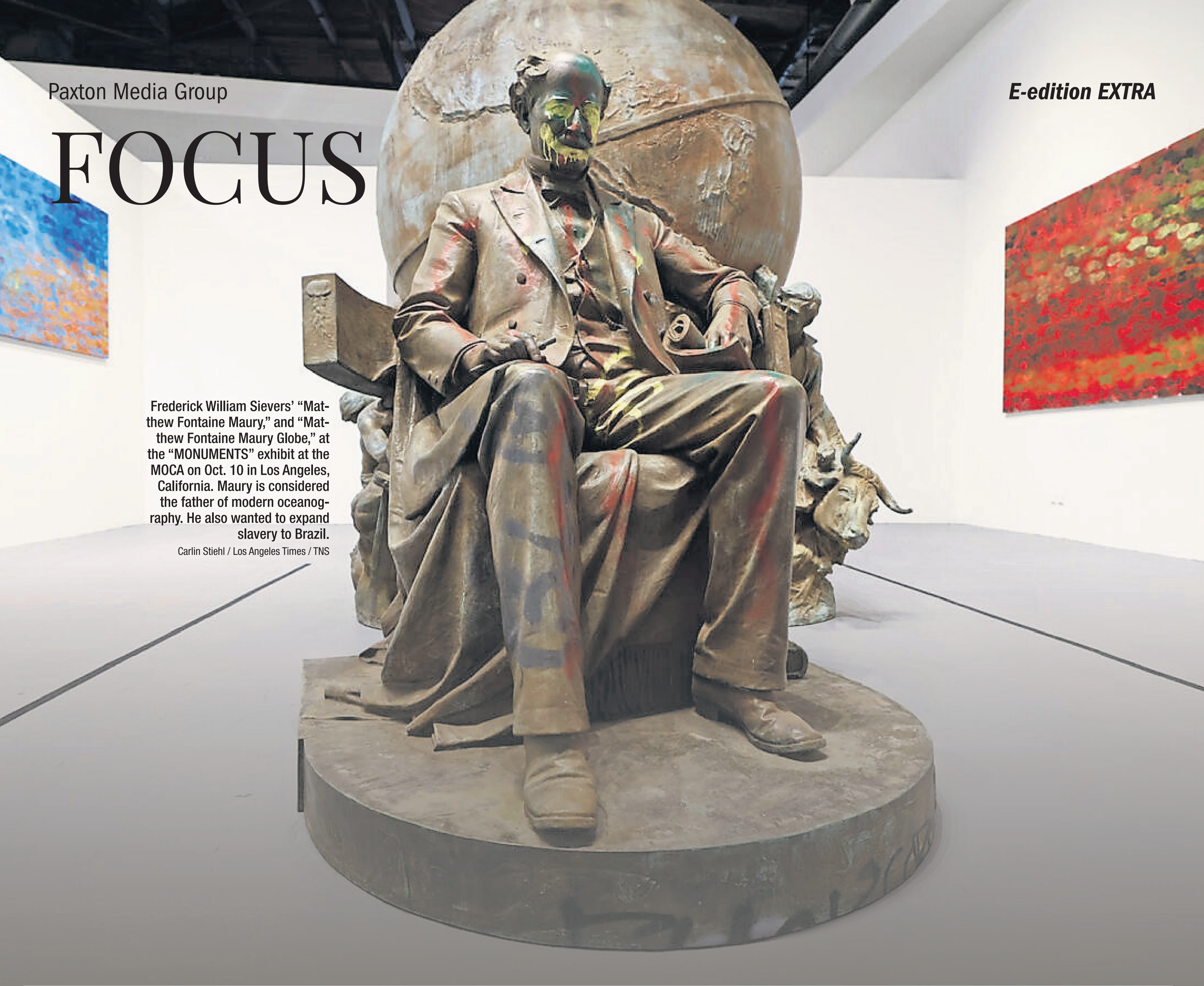


Frederick William Sievers' "Matthew Fontaine Maury," and "Matthew Fontaine Maury Globe," at the "MONUMENTS" exhibit at the MOCA on Oct. 10 in Los Angeles, California. Maury is considered the father of modern oceanography. He also wanted to expand slavery to Brazil.
Carlin Stiehl / Los Angeles Times / TNS

While Trump restores Confederate monuments, this bold LA art exhibition confronts them

By JESSICA GELT
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

LOS ANGELES — For the past decade, Confederate memorials have been a flashpoint in America's heated culture wars. More than 150 statues and monuments were doused with paint, defaced and brought down by protesters, but in President Trump's second term, they are being reinstalled. A statue of Confederate Gen. Albert Pike is returning to Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C., and another, known as the "Reconciliation Monument," will be restored to Arlington Cemetery.

The tumultuous state of affairs is supercharging a provocative, highly anticipated new exhibition titled "Monuments," featuring nearly a dozen removed statues, some towering up to 15 feet. The show, co-organized and co-presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Brick, opens Thursday and runs through May 3, 2026.

"Monuments" was originally supposed to debut two years ago, and if it had, it would have entered a radically different political landscape.

"Suddenly everyone thinks that we're doing this in response to our president, which isn't at all the case. This is more a case of the political moment coming around to capture us," said MOCA senior curator Bennett Simpson, who organized the show alongside Brick director Hamza Walker, artist Kara Walker (no relation to Hamza), Brick curatorial associate Hannah Burstein and MOCA curatorial assistant Paula Kroll.

The urgent, raw and ongoing nature of the public debate around civil rights, made all the more incendiary by the Trump administration's attempts to minimize the history of slavery by threatening to remove artworks related to it at the Smithsonian and national parks, contributes to the power of the exhibition, which juxtaposes the statues with art that elicits emotionally charged responses.

"This is an associative poetic art show," Simpson says of the 18 participating artists.

At MOCA, a statue titled "Confederate Women of Maryland," erected in Baltimore by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, features two women – one of whom is cradling a fallen male soldier in her lap in a tableau resembling Michelangelo's "Pietà." This monument resides directly across from a series of photographs by John Henry featuring Black mothers similarly holding their sons in urban environments.

Some, such as a statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, were splattered in paint by protesters. Others, including the base of a statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee, were covered in graffiti with phrases like "Protect Black Women." They appear in the museum just as they looked when they were removed from parks and plazas in Richmond and Charlottesville, Va., respectively. Davis now rests on his side in a room with a group of chilling photographs taken by Andres Serrano of hooded Ku Klux Klan leaders in Georgia.

Hank Willis Thomas' "A Suspension of Hostilities," at the "MONUMENTS" exhibit at the MOCA on on Oct. 10 in Los Angeles, California. The 1969 Dodge Charger from the TV show "The Dukes of Hazzard" is named General Lee.

A statue of former Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney – who in 1857 wrote the majority opinion in the notorious Dred Scott case, which ruled that slaves could never be citizens and were thus property – sits beside a statue of prominent newspaper owner Josephus Daniels, who helped foment the 1898 Wilmington massacre in which a mob of more than 2,000 white supremacists killed as many as 300 people in the course of overthrowing the city's duly elected biracial government.

Across from these frozen-in-time relics is a wall of studio portraits of Black North Carolinians taken in 1910 by photographer Hugh Mangum, whose contact sheets of both Black and white people show that he ran an integrated studio in the Jim Crow South. The people in the proud, haunting photos would have been alive during the Wilmington massacre, Simpson noted.

"It felt important for him to meet his public," Simpson said, gesturing at Daniels.

Hamza Walker first conceived of "Monuments" when the statues began coming down in the wake of the 2015 shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. The hate crime, which targeted Black people, resulted in nine deaths and sparked a mass movement against the veneration of figures who fought to perpetuate slavery in America.

What to do with the country's many Confederate statues and monuments had become a matter for debate. Some people thought they should remain untouched, with added plaques addressing the history of slavery. Others felt they should be destroyed.

Hamza Walker wanted to use them in an art exhibition and ask artists to respond.

For the most part, the removed statues were tucked away out of sight. The pieces featured in "Monuments" are on loan to MOCA, trucked in on tractor trailers from whatever obscure location they were stored – hidden under tarps in water treatment facilities and stashed in warehouses alongside bags of salt and snow plows.

Karon Davis' "Found Cause," at the "MONUMENTS" exhibit at the MOCA on Oct. 10 in Los Angeles, California. It shows the artist's son holding a small Confederate horse by its tail.

Getting the monuments proved to be a time-consuming undertaking, made all the more so by their controversial nature. After the city of New Orleans took down four statues in May 2017, a fierce backlash erupted, culminating in the infamous Charlottesville rally in August. For two days during what is now called "the Summer of Hate," white nationalists and neo-Nazis carrying tiki torches, swastikas and Confederate flags filled the streets. A man rammed his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing a 32-year-old, and President Trump famously declared there were "very fine people on both sides."

The "Monuments" curators spent countless hours writing detailed proposals about how they intended to use the statues, which, for the most part, have to be returned. They needed to give assurances that the pieces would be treated with care, insured and protected from harm.

A single monument is housed across town at the Brick – it is set in relief because it stands in a category all its own, said Hamza Walker. The sculpture, Kara Walker's "Unmanned Drone," is the only monument that has been physically altered.

Walker used a plasma cutter to slice apart a statue of prominent Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson, which she welded back together in an entirely new form. Jackson no longer has a face, but his hair is speared by a portion of his horse's upper thigh. The horse now appears to be standing upright with its head protruding from the back of its saddle. Jackson's arm, which was amputated before his death, is now separated from his body and affixed to the edge of the statue's base. His legs are sliced open, and his saber rests on the ground beside the dissected, reconfigured whole.

The effect is breathtaking and violent.

"Ideologically it's an affront, aesthetically it's an affront ... on a piano, it's not just a chord, this is a tone cluster," said Hamza Walker, of the reimagined statue. "Kara went for it. She did what artists do in terms of marshaling an energy and force, and then concentrating it on this object and coming up with this piece."

The statue was deeded to the Brick – which wrote a competitive proposal to get it – for the sole purpose of transformation. This is because the statue, by virtue of its recent, ugly history, had become radioactive, Hamza Walker said.

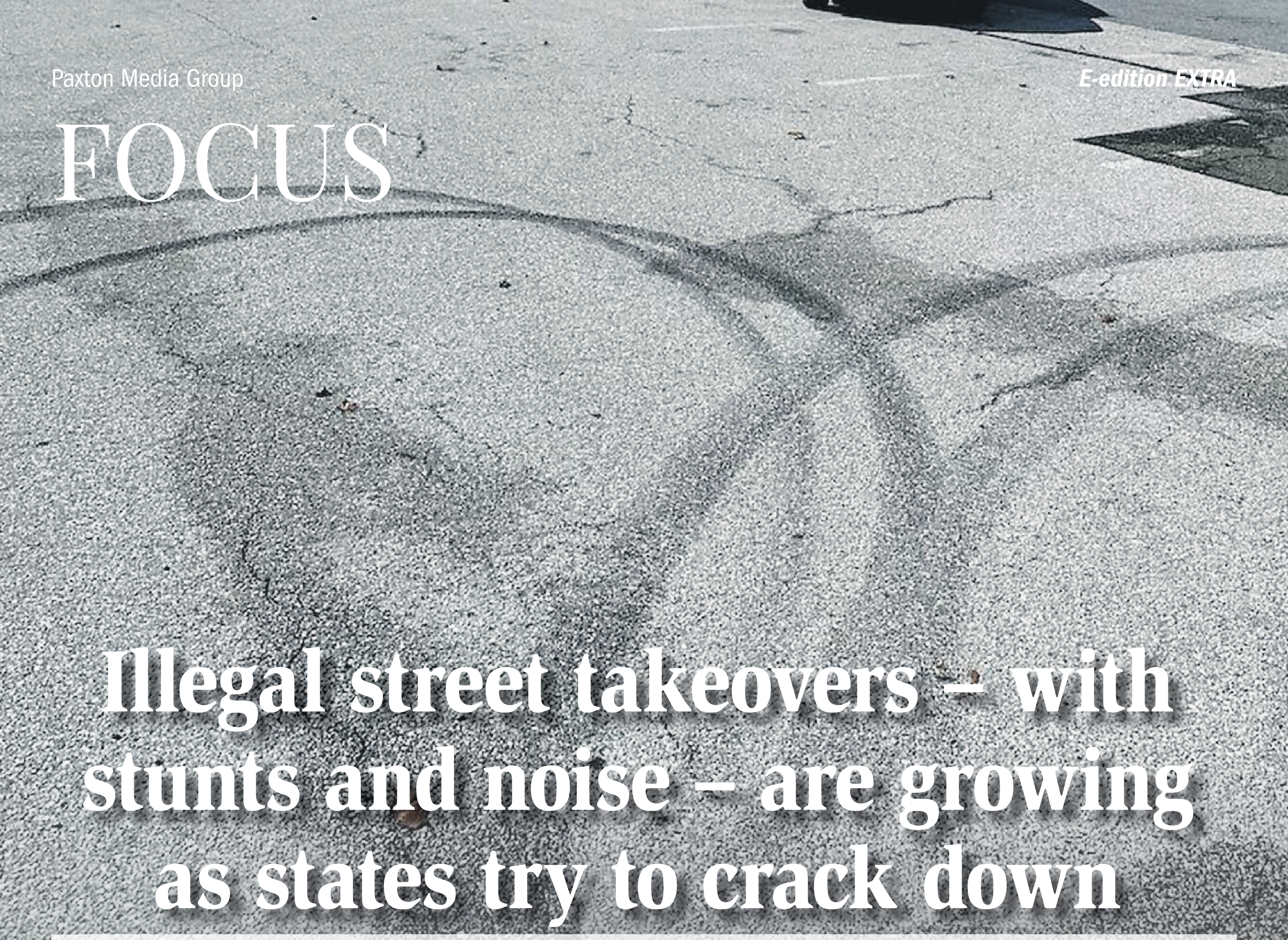
That history is detailed in photos, newspaper articles and letters at the Brick. The year after the Charleston church massacre, a young Black woman, Zyahna Bryant, petitioned the city of Charlottesville to remove its statues of Jackson and Lee. In the midst of her efforts, the city became the national focal point of ongoing American racism as Unite the Right protesters gathered around Lee's statue in Market Street Park.

"The mask is off, right? These things are now straight-up toxic, there's no going back," Hamza Walker said of the Charlottesville statues, explaining that the city's mandate was to get rid of them, not to just put them in storage. "That's what distinguishes Charlottesville from other places."

In 2023, the city gave its Lee statue to the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, which spearheaded a project to melt the 10,000-pound statue and use the resulting bronze ingots for an entirely new piece of art.

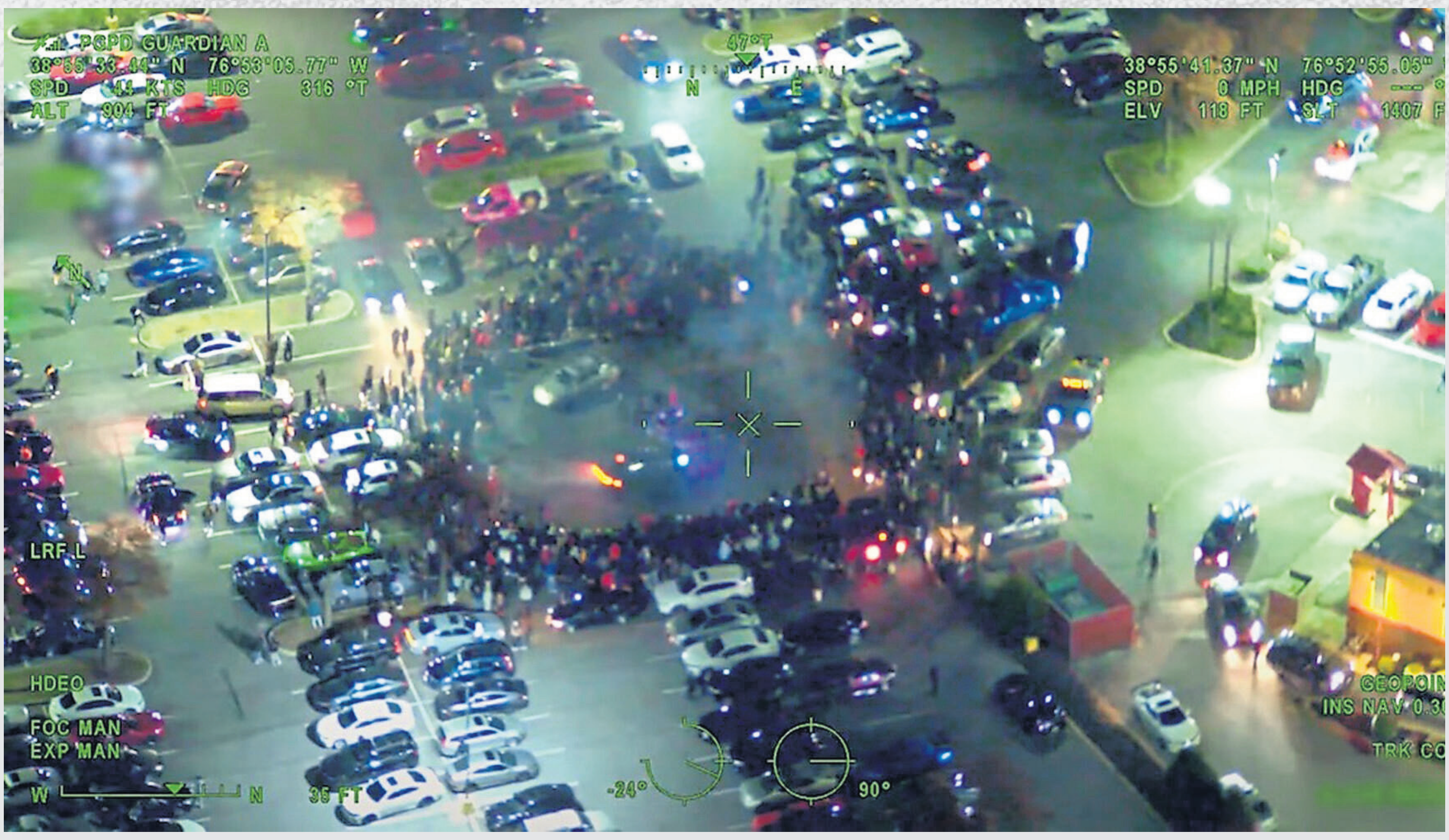
Kara Walker's sculpture seeks to take the focus off Jackson and put it on his horse, a trusty steed named Little Sorrel that Jackson valued for his bravery in battle. Jackson died from his wounds eight days after being hit by friendly fire while returning to camp during the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863. He attained saint-like status in the South, which surrendered the Civil War two years later. Little Sorrel was also revered. The red war horse lived to a ripe old age and was trotted out for special events. True believers took patches of Little Sorrel's fur, and upon its death, the horse was taxidermied.

"With the nature of this object, what do you do with it?" Hamza Walker said of the Jackson statue. "Yeah, here's your monument back."



Illegal street takeovers – with stunts and noise – are growing as states try to crack down

By AMANDA HERNÁNDEZ
Stateline.org (TNS)



Photos from Prince George's County Police Department

TOP: Tire marks remain from a car meetup in mid-September in Landover, Maryland. **ABOVE:** In this image taken from surveillance video, two cars drive in a circle amid a crowd of onlookers in Prince George's County, Maryland. Illegal street takeovers, where drivers block roads to perform stunts, have become an increasing concern in cities across the country.

Just before 2 a.m. on Sept. 14, engines roared in a Landover, Maryland, shopping center parking lot as a crowd gathered to watch souped-up cars spin in tight circles under the glow of streetlights. Then one car lost control.

Police say the white Infiniti sedan careened into a woman standing nearby, throwing her against another car. Police documents describe a violent impact that left her with life-threatening injuries: multiple fractures, lung trauma and a breathing tube to keep her alive. She survived and has since been released from the hospital.

The driver sped off, police said, but was later arrested and charged with assault and a range of traffic violations. Prince George's County has seen at least 12 such takeovers this year, part of a growing trend that has prompted calls for tougher laws and more coordinated enforcement nationwide.

Policing experts say such events – which are often organized on social media and can draw hundreds of people to block intersections, highways or parking lots for stunt driving – have become increasingly dangerous and difficult to contain.

Like a flash mob, participants may swarm in and use their cars to block the streets, forming a circular barricade that stops the flow of traffic. Inside the circle, decked-out cars – often with performance upgrades or flashy modifications – spin, performing donuts, burnouts and other stunts. ATVs and motorcycles may join in. Passengers sometimes hang out of the windows. Tires squeal. Engines roar. Onlookers may gather nearby, filming and cheering.

At some takeovers, people may even ignite fireworks as exhaust smoke fills the air, adding to the chaos.

Takeovers usually unfold late at night, typically between midnight and 3 a.m., and can last anywhere from an hour to several hours, depending on the size of the event and how quickly police respond. Officers may first respond by using aerial surveillance to get a sense of the scene before moving in with cruisers to disperse crowds and, if needed, issue citations or make arrests.

On a recent weekend, street takeovers erupted across four Massachusetts communities – Boston, Fall River, Middleborough and Randolph – where large crowds blocked roads, set off fireworks and clashed with police. In Boston, a police cruiser caught fire after being struck by fireworks, and authorities made seven arrests across the four incidents.

In recent years, cities, counties and states have ramped up enforcement and enacted tougher penalties aimed at deterring what some officials describe as a reckless and fast-growing street takeover culture.

Maryland stepped up its efforts to curb street takeovers through a combination of legislation and coordinated policing. A law targeting illegal street racing and exhibition driving, which went into effect last year, allows convicted violators to have eight or more points assessed against their driving records – which could lead to license suspension or revocation – and carries penalties of up to a year in prison.

In July 2024, Maryland State Police established a regional task force that includes state police, the Maryland Transportation Authority Police, and local county and city departments.

The task force has made 61 arrests, recovered 37 handguns and 13 stolen vehicles, and dismantled 99 takeovers as of Sept. 23, according to state police.

Street takeovers – sometimes called sideshows – have existed in various forms for decades but gained popularity during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, according to policing experts. The events are often livestreamed and shared on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, where they can draw millions of views.

"At a time when staffing is a real issue, departments are having to allocate resources to the problem and come up with solutions," said Chuck Wexler, the executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a national nonprofit think tank focused on policing standards. "It has mushroomed into a big problem."

Police say the events can endanger bystanders, disrupt neighborhoods and sometimes involve other criminal activity, including vandalism, shootings and the use of stolen vehicles or parts.

In Prince George's County, at least one street takeover last year was the scene of a homicide, according to local police.

New measures

This year, at least four states – Connecticut, New York, South Carolina and Virginia – have considered legislation aimed at expanding penalties for exhibition driving and street takeovers. Some proposed measures included higher fines, vehicle seizures and jail or prison time, depending on the severity of the offense.

The Connecticut and Virginia measures were enacted into law. The South Carolina and New York bills stalled in their originating legislative chambers.

Connecticut's new law, which is now fully in effect, imposes tougher penalties on people involved in street takeovers. Anyone with three or more violations can have their driver's license suspended for two years. The law also allows towns and cities to create their own local rules to address street takeovers. Municipalities also are allowed to destroy ATVs, dirt bikes and mini-motorcycles seized during these events.

Virginia's law, which took effect in April, also strengthened penalties. People who take part in a takeover could face up to a year in jail, a $2,500 fine or both. Anyone caught riding on a car's hood or roof can be fined $500. And if a takeover results in someone's death, the law treats it as a felony, with a sentence ranging from one to 20 years in prison.

Some policing experts say these new laws are a step forward, but note that, like many public safety issues, addressing street takeovers also requires coordination between police and government officials at both the state and local levels.

"This is one case where legislation makes a difference," said Wexler, of the Police Executive Research Forum.

More recently, the Milwaukee Common Council passed new fines for spectators and participants in street takeovers. The measure, which will go into effect Oct. 11, sets penalties ranging from $500 to $1,000 for spectators, $400 to $1,000 for drivers or organizers, and $300 to $1,000 for passengers.

The Milwaukee Police Department formed a task force in May to address street takeovers. From Sept. 2 to Oct. 1, the city's police department responded to at least 30 street takeovers, according to police.

"It's another tool we can use – something that helps," said David Feldmeier, an inspector with the Milwaukee Police Department who oversees the city's uniformed patrol. He added that the new penalties, particularly for spectators, will hopefully make the events less appealing and discourage people from attending altogether.

"We know we have a long way to go," Feldmeier told Stateline.

In Los Angeles County, the district attorney's office announced a partnership with law enforcement and other county departments to reduce street takeovers.

Launched in August, the plan aims to increase youth outreach and education, expand enforcement operations and install deterrents at intersections known for takeovers.

California also enacted a legislative package last year targeting street takeovers. The laws, which went into effect earlier this year, make it easier for law enforcement to arrest sideshow participants and to impound vehicles used in illegal activities on streets or highways or in parking lots.

Enforcement challenges

Police say enforcing laws against street takeovers can be difficult and dangerous. The events often draw large crowds, making it challenging to control spectators and maintain public safety. The takeovers also tend to happen in areas that block major intersections or parking lots, which may delay police and emergency medical services from reaching the scene when someone is hurt.

Some policing experts say that targeting takeovers in one area can sometimes push the problem elsewhere.

"Cities have found that if they crack down in their city, the problem will be reduced, and it'll affect other cities," Wexler said.

Police departments nationwide have tried a lot of strategies to address the gatherings. Some have used undercover officers, shared intelligence with neighboring jurisdictions and monitored social media to spot events before they happen. In some areas, police have even set up tip lines and offered cash rewards to people who can provide advance information about planned takeovers.

Still, officers sometimes face a disconnect between what people expect police to do and what's safe or allowed under department policy.

Some residents might want police to immediately chase down drivers, for example, but many law enforcement leaders say high-speed pursuits – especially when no violent crime has occurred – can endanger not only drivers and officers but also the community at large. Police also don't always know who is showing up to these events or whether attendees may be carrying guns, drugs or other illegal items.

That means police might ease into a crowd to break up onlookers, or let a takeover play out before clearing streets for oncoming traffic.

"You never really know who's showing up or what their true intent is," said interim Prince George's County Police Chief George Nader. "We want the public to know that this is a dangerous thing."

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Stateline is part of States Newsroom, a national nonprofit news organization focused on state policy.

FOCUS

Video screenshot courtesy of St. John's Lutheran Church / Stateline / TNS

St. John's Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin, is being converted into a 10-story high-rise that will combine a worship space with more than 100 affordable apartments. Lawmakers see the potential for much-needed housing on church-owned land, but opponents worry local communities could lose their authority over neighborhood development.

Can states, and a little bit of faith, convert *church land* into *affordable housing?*

By ROBBIE SEQUEIRA
Stateline.org (TNS)

Growing up in a religious family, Florida Republican state Sen. Alexis Calatayud has seen how many church communities are no longer anchored to a single building in the way they used to be. Her small prayer groups take place over chats these days, not necessarily in person or sitting shoulder-to-shoulder in pews.

With churches in her Miami-Dade County district grappling with shrinking membership and aging buildings, Calatayud thinks those institutions can do good with their unused land, by acting as anchors of new housing rather than as bystanders in neighborhood redevelopment.

"When you look at someone sitting on a small church, on a 10-acre property with a dwindling congregation, the question becomes, 'How can this entity continue to be the beating heart of the community?'" Calatayud said in an interview.

"I think it's to create a village, where we can create more housing and even centralize other needs in the community on that land."

This year, Florida enacted a measure, sponsored by Calatayud, allowing multifamily residential development on land that is both owned by a religious institution and occupied by a house of worship, so long as at least 10 percent of the new units are affordable. Some housing advocates believe the zoning override has the potential to unlock roughly 30,000 parcels statewide.

Florida's new law is part of a growing movement known as YIGBY – Yes in God's Backyard. Touted by many faith leaders, lawmakers and developers, the movement imagines a connection between a religious mission to serve and the very real hurdles of building affordable housing.

If the U.S. is to meet the nation's demand for new apartments, developers are going to need land, experts say, and parcels owned by faith-based organizations are starting to become a part of the solution for some states. At the same time, some skeptics question whether the movement could strip local communities of having a say in neighborhood development.

Places of worship are found in every corner of the United States. Land owned by faith-based organizations makes up 84 million square feet in New York City, for example, with enough land for 22,000 units on just the vacant lots and surface parking lots of those organizations, according to the Furman Center of New York University. Elsewhere, HousingForward Virginia says faith-based organizations own 74,000 acres in the state, nearly twice the size of Richmond.

California enacted what is considered the first statewide YIGBY law in 2023. It cleared the way for churches and other places of worship, as well as nonprofit universities, to create affordable housing on their land. It allows landowners to bypass public hearings, discretionary votes by city councils or planning boards, and certain environmental reviews so long as they meet affordability requirements, with at least 75 percent of the homes affordable for low-income households.

Several states – Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York and Texas – have considered YIGBY legislation this year, though none has passed. And a bill filed last month in Congress would allow rental properties to be built on currently unused church land with federal assistance.

Opponents of the Colorado bill frame it as state overreach on local zoning decisions and worry about a potential pathway for religious landowners to bypass Fair Housing Act protections for housing applicants who may not share that faith, according to a position paper opposing Colorado's YIGBY legislation.

Beverly Stables, a lobbyist for the Colorado Municipal League, told Stateline that local governments worry YIGBY bills could undermine constitutional home-rule authority and saddle towns with unfunded state mandates.

"Our members have worked successfully with schools and churches on housing projects already," she said. "The question is, what problem are we really trying to solve?"

The Rev. Patrick Reidy, an associate professor of law at Notre Dame who has studied the relationship between housing and faith-based organizations, says states and cities are eager to partner with faith-based organizations to use their land.

It's not an easy decision for faith leaders to switch the purpose of their land from a devoted congregation space to housing, he said.

"The decision to change the way church land has been used historically for decades or even centuries is not easy for a place of worship to make, so lawmakers should meet faith communities where they are," said Reidy, who also is co-director of Notre Dame's Church Properties Initiative.

"It's more an understanding that the way places of worship approach housing is from a moral mission to serve, so things like financing, zoning and legal knowhow to create housing requires some walk-through for faith-based organizations," Reidy said.

"The real challenge is learning to speak each other's language."

'Right in the middle'

Every afternoon at 3:22, members of St. John's Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin, pause what they are doing and pray. Whether they are working, at home, watching baseball's Milwaukee Brewers or sitting in a temporary worship space, they pray at that exact time.

It isn't random: "322" is the address where the German Lutheran church has stood downtown at East Washington Avenue and North Hancock Street – just a block from the state Capitol – for 170 years, the Rev. Peter Beeson said.

Congregation members no longer worship there because the site could be set for the biggest transformation in its history: trading in stained-glass windows and church pews for a 10-story high-rise that will combine a worship space with more than 100 affordable apartments.

Beeson told Stateline that the congregation moved out of the building in the fall of 2023 for a groundbreaking later that same year.

"Our current building was built in 1905, and was nearing the end of its useful life, with many additions and renovations over the years," Beeson said. "And it made sense to sacrifice our existing building to build affordable housing plus worship and community space as a way of serving our mission – providing much needed affordable housing for 130 or so families, and providing a home for the congregation for the next 150 years."

The congregation, founded in 1856 by German Lutherans, has evolved with the needs of its community.

The church hosted a men's homeless shelter for more than 20 years, ran a drop-in center for people with mental illness and offered small-scale aid for residents seeking anything from bus tickets to steel-toed work boots to child care, Beeson said.

Before construction could get underway on the housing project, though, Beeson and the church ran into a familiar issue that constrained housing across the country in 2023 – rapidly increasing construction costs and skyrocketing interest rates.

Beeson said he isn't deterred. Other projects have taken 10 to 15 years to break ground, he said. "So keeping that timeline in mind, we are right in the middle."

He believes the project, which has received sizable donations from community members via GoFundMe, is a God-ordained mission to provide a service for its community.

"We are continuing to move forward with the project. There have been setbacks and challenges along the way," Beeson said. "However, like God led the Israelites through the wilderness with a pillar of fire by day and a pillar of clouds by night, God continues to open doors and pave pathways to bring this project to completion."

Ceding local control

The economic realities surrounding homebuilding are among many hurdles challenging congregations that want to develop new housing.

In states such as Colorado, local governments worried that a proposed statewide development measure that would give preferential treatment to faith-based organizations could undermine local control and even potentially open the door to religious discrimination.

"Not suggesting it from all entities," said Stables, of the Colorado Municipal League, "but we were concerned about the potential for discrimination, and potential violations of Fair Housing Act requirements."

Stables also thinks this year's legislation was premature, just a year after Colorado lawmakers made sweeping changes to land use rules – including new laws removing parking minimums and encouraging transit-oriented developments and accessory dwelling units – that she said haven't had time to take effect or be meaningfully implemented locally.

She also said the bill would have stripped local governments of zoning authority while offering no new resources. More than 200 municipalities opted into an affordable housing fund created through a 2022 ballot initiative, Stables said, but the legislature has been sweeping out some of that money for other budgetary needs, leaving cities under-resourced to deliver on those housing goals.

In the end, Colorado's legislation passed the House but died in the Senate after supporters concluded it didn't have the votes to pass.

YIGBY supporters elsewhere have had to balance the tension between state goals and local zoning authority. A 2019 Washington law requires cities and counties to offer density bonuses for affordable housing on religious land – an incentive, but not a legal override of zoning laws.

In Minnesota, state Sen. Susan Pha, a Democrat, told Stateline she modeled some aspects of her YIGBY proposal off the California law. She also tailored aspects of her bill – such as a focus on middle-housing options like small studios – to find solutions that work specifically for her state.

Pha said some of her big battles have been around the allowances of small lot sizes, such as 220-square-foot studio units, which she said the state "really needs" in order to make a dent in its housing shortage.

"The obstacle really is zoning," Pha said. "If we can change some of those zoning requirements, we could produce more affordable housing and leverage the space and the dedicated work these faith-based organizations already do."

Pha's bill failed to reach a floor vote.

Other YIGBY-like policies have passed in localities including Atlanta; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Seattle. Atlanta's program aims for the creation of at least 2,000 units of affordable housing over eight years.

When New York City passed its City of Yes housing initiative in December 2024, it permitted faith-based organizations to convert underused properties into housing by lifting zoning, height and setback requirements.

Unlocking land, a bit at a time

In an interview with Stateline, Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens pointed out that some of the city's historic churches sit on prime land with underused parking lots that at one time were filled by many of the churchgoers' cars.

Unlike many developers who might flip properties after short-term affordability requirements expire, Dickens said, churches may offer stability, since their mission is to serve "the least, the less and the lost" – meaning they might be less likely to sell off the property due to market pressure.

Atlanta is working with financial partners such as Enterprise and Wells Fargo to guide faith-based institutions that need that help, he said.

"Churches are usually on great corners, and they're hallmarks of the community with land that's underutilized, and their mission aligns perfectly with affordable housing," Dickens said. "We've got churches that say, 'Teach us how to develop. We have no idea what we're doing.'"

The potential is vast, experts say. California faith-based organizations and nonprofit colleges own about 170,000 acres of land, equivalent in size to the city of Oakland, and much of it could be developed under the state's YIGBY law, according to a 2023 report by the Terner Center for Housing Innovation at the University of California, Berkeley.

In North Carolina, congregations have had small successes. A Presbyterian church in Charlotte turned an unused education wing into 21 units of permanent housing, and an Episcopal church in Chapel Hill built three tiny homes on its property for a trio of formerly homeless residents.

Eli Smith, the director of the nonprofit Faith-Based Housing Initiative, argues that state YIGBY laws should ease affordability requirements for small infill projects such as those in North Carolina and allow them to get built more quickly. Otherwise, he said, small churches' projects "can't get off the ground."

"Think of it as a cottage neighborhood tucked behind a sanctuary – people know each other, it's beautiful, it's meaningful," Smith said. "The future of this movement isn't in [high-rise apartment] towers; it's in small, intentional communities that fit their surroundings."

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Stateline is part of States Newsroom, a national nonprofit news organization focused on state policy.

HEALTH

Confused about current vaccine recommendations?

Here's what to know

By HANNA WEBSTER
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (TNS)

With shakeups at a key federal agency that releases vaccine guidelines, it's been a confusing past few months regarding immunization for younger people.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in June fired all 17 members on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, leading to outrage among independent medical societies and the formation of multistate health coalitions, including the Northeast Public Health Collaborative that Pennsylvania joined in September.

ACIP was revamped with 12 new members, many of whom have criticized the COVID-19 vaccine, opposed mandates or posted health misinformation. Former member Noel Brewer told NPR in September that members of the new panel "fundamentally do not understand vaccines in a deep way."

Still, many who support the "Make America Healthy Again" movement are emboldened by Kennedy's commitment to shepherding research into chronic diseases and relieved to see a panel of fresh faces willing to criticize federal policy.

"ACIP and (the American Academy of Pediatrics) have been in lockstep pretty much forever, and now that they're out of step, it's confusing for a lot of different people," said Jeffrey Lancaster, associate chief medical officer for WVU Medicine Children's Hospital and a pediatric hospitalist.

Here's what to know about vaccines and the ACIP rulings as respiratory virus season – which typically spans from October to February – descends.

What has ACIP ruled so far?

Thimerosal: In July, the panel voted, 5-1, to remove thimerosal from influenza vaccines, citing a decades-old debate about its potential harm.

Thimerosal is a preservative used in some multi-dose vaccines to prevent contamination from bacteria. The American Academy of Pediatrics in 1999 asked vaccine manufacturers to remove it out of an abundance of caution.

Thimerosal is a mercury-based product, and the public was concerned about infant exposure to mercury. As a result, most vaccines in the U.S. do not contain thimerosal.

Kennedy regularly stresses the importance of removing mercury from vaccines, a framing health experts have called irresponsible and misleading.

Informed consent: A September ACIP meeting brought about multiple updates to federal vaccine policy.

For the updated version of the COVID vaccine, the panel chose to move from the blanket guideline it had offered since the vaccine's release in 2020. Instead, ACIP now recommends the vaccine be given on the basis of individual decision-making.

"Informed consent is back," said Deputy Health Secretary Jim O'Neill in an October news release about the ruling. "CDC's 2022 blanket recommendation for perpetual COVID-19 boosters deterred health care providers from talking about the risks and benefits of vaccination for the individual patient or parent. That changes today."

This confused some providers.

"The COVID ruling was interesting," said Andy Nowalk, associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine and clinical director in the Division of Infectious Diseases at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

"From a practitioner's perspective, I don't feel like we are lacking anything in terms of getting informed consent right now. We routinely counsel when we give vaccines about the risks and benefits of vaccines for every dose."

Barbara Nightingale, deputy director of clinical services for the Allegheny County Health Department, concurred.

"Everybody receives an information sheet about vaccines, as required by the federal government," she said. "That has not changed."

MMRV: Splitting a common combination vaccine was another outcome of ACIP's Sept. 18 and 19 meetings.

Some providers give the MMR shot, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella, and the varicella shot, which protects against chickenpox, in a combo version. This gives parents an opportunity to reduce the number of immunization visits for their child.

"Anything that decreases barriers to vaccines is something we promote," said Dr. Nightingale. "It just gives more options at the parent's discretion."

Health and Human Services said in September that there were concerns about the risk of febrile seizure with the combination vaccine, or an acute seizure accompanied by a fever, leading to the recommendation against it.

Studies have found an increased risk of febrile seizure with the combination shot, but have said the absolute risk overall is small. In a paper published in 2014 in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, authors said policymakers should balance their findings with the potential benefits of giving the combo vaccine.

"This is a known phenomenon," said Dr. Nowalk. "It's a really good example of the fact that we are always paying attention to vaccine safety, even after they're on the market. They are among the most tightly controlled and safely regulated medical products that we have out there."

He also pointed out that the risk of severe events from chickenpox outweighs the small risk of seizure, which is why the combo vaccine was supported previously.

To make a general recommendation against the MMRV combination vaccine because of the small risk of febrile seizure seems to Dr. Nowalk to be "an interpretation of the evidence that is shared by none of the major societies involved in vaccination."

It's among the challenges "we're running into," he said, "that a lot of the views that are coming out are really dramatically minority views that are not well supported by the evidence."

Drs. Lancaster and Nightingale said their practice is to always give the MMR and varicella shots separately for the child's first dose, then provide an option for the combination vaccine when the child is about 4 years old.

Following ACIP's September meeting, Pennsylvania's governor's office and Department of Health issued guidelines pointing parents to trustworthy sources of information and highlighting the American Academy of Pediatrics' vaccine schedule for kids.

What about side effects?

"The vaccines we use have been studied over and over again. They are extremely safe and low risk," said Dr. Lancaster. "That does not mean it's impossible to have a side effect."

The most common side effect to vaccination tends to be a local reaction to the vaccine – a sore arm. Over the two days following, patients may experience mild flu-like symptoms as the immune system mounts a response to the particles in the vaccine.

Just like any medication, a vaccine is not 100 percent risk-free, said Dr. Nightingale.

"One of the challenges that people face is that they're looking at, 'OK, this vaccine may have some type of risks with it,' and they're not balancing that with the risk of the disease itself," she said.

It's a maxim providers repeat constantly: Vaccines are victims of their own success.

"Polio wasn't that long ago," said Dr. Lancaster. "We've lost touch with that. My mom's best friend had polio and had a lisp and walked with a limp for the rest of her life. We are a victim of our own success as far as vaccines go."

The provider's role

Dr. Nowalk says he discusses this all with parents, as well as past issues that may have come up with a certain vaccine. The heart condition myocarditis, for one, was cropping up in cases of COVID infection and, for some, after COVID vaccination.

A meta-analysis published in 2022 in Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine of 58 million people with myocarditis found that the relative risk of developing the condition after COVID infection was more than seven times higher than from the vaccine, and that rates of the condition decreased over time.

Dr. Nowalk said he's never afraid of a conversation about a vaccine's risks and benefits.

"If we're not willing, as physicians, to be really open and honest about, 'Here's the data, here are the risks and benefits,' and to really advocate for vaccines in a collaborative way with patients and families, then we're not doing our job the right way."

Dr. Lancaster said that when parents ask such questions, it's a healthy sign they care about the well-being of their child.

"Having these discussions with parents can make visits a little bit longer," he said, "but this is the heart and soul of doctoring."

The bottom line

The onslaught of health information online can be overwhelming.

If parents have questions about vaccines, it's always best to talk to a health care provider and not rely on social media for the sole source of health information, said Dr. Nightingale.

"We know that people are exposed generally to a lot of misinformation, and the way that misinformation works is it tends to feed off things like fear that make people very anxious," she said. "And so we want to make sure that they talk to someone who has accurate information about that, rather than just having social media as their exclusive source of information."

Eric Harkleroad / KFF Health News / TNS

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. testifies before the Senate Finance Committee on Sept. 4.

ASK THE PEDIATRICIAN

Body odor in kids and teens

By MEGAN YANNY, MD, FAAP
American Academy of Pediatrics (TNS)

One of the first signs of puberty in your child is likely to be new body odor. Maybe they are a little bit stinkier after their baseball game, or their laundry basket scent is filling up the room. This is perfectly normal.

Every child will have some body odor as puberty begins. This often starts as early as age 8 or 9.

Pre-teens and teens have body odor from increased apocrine gland sweating. This means that oil along with sweat now comes out of these sweat glands. Then, bacteria that live on the skin use those oils and release extra smells. Also, any place your child's body that is growing hair is more likely to hold odor in.

If you notice more body odor coming from your teen, talk to them about ways to help take care of their bodies and limit odor.

Don't forget the soap

It is important to clean your body with soap and water. This helps wash away odor-causing bacteria, oil and sweat. You can use an antibacterial soap occasionally if you choose, but most body washes work well for daily use (and help prevent bacterial resistance). Focus especially on the armpits, feet and groin, washing them with soap and water. And, our scalps also sweat, so do not forget about shampoo.

Shower regularly

It is typically recommended to shower daily or every other day once you start noticing body odor. Kids may especially need daily showers if they are very active or in sports. Talk with your child's doctor if they have eczema or other skin conditions that might affect specific soap or showering recommendations.

Use deodorant, with or without antiperspirant

Stick or spray-on deodorant often comes with antiperspirant ingredients in it, such as aluminum salts. These help decrease the amount of sweat coming out of the glands and prevent odors. The deodorant part helps cover or hide smells using baking soda, alcohols or fragrances.

Consider fragrance- or aluminum-free options for sensitive skin

Some people get skin irritation from fragrances, perfumes or from antiperspirant ingredients. You can look for deodorants with labels that say "fragrance-free," "hypoallergenic" or "for sensitive skin." There are many "aluminum-free" options nowadays as well.

Some scented body sprays do not contain true deodorant or antiperspirant ingredients. The fragrance in them is meant to cover up or mask other smells. However, these products do not always prevent body odor.

Prevent foot odor by wearing socks with shoes

Cotton socks or moisture-wicking socks are especially helpful, along with changing them often.

Choose breathable fabrics when sweating to minimize odor

Cotton clothing or other natural fabric like linen or wool breathes better and can keep you cooler. Change clothes after working up a sweat from exercise or sports.

Remember that body odor is a normal part of growing up. The tips above can help your child manage it. But what if these ideas don't work?

It's a good idea to talk with the doctor if your child or teen is having constant or excessive sweating, or their sweating is affecting their mental health or social interactions.

Gautier Willaume / Dreamstime / TNS

One of the first signs of puberty in your child is likely to be new body odor.

The doctor may recommend testing to check for an underlying medical condition that can cause abnormal perspiration and body odor. They can also discuss treatment options for an uncommon genetic condition called hyperhidrosis, which causes spells of drenching sweat.

Also, talk with your child's pediatrician if you are noticing body odor or other puberty changes starting earlier than age 8.

Megan Yanny, MD, FAAP, is a board-certified general pediatrician and Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. Dr Yanny is involved in medical student and resident education and is a member of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

MAYO CLINIC Q&A

How to decide which breast cancer surgery is right for you

By MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK
Mayo Clinic News Network (TNS)

Dreamstime / TNS

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I understand surgery is often included as part of the treatment plan for breast cancer. If I'm a candidate for lumpectomy but am also considering a mastectomy, what are some things I should keep in mind? Should my breast density be a factor in my decision-making?

ANSWER: Women diagnosed with breast cancer are almost immediately confronted with treatment decisions. If your surgical oncologist gave you a choice between a lumpectomy and a mastectomy to remove a tumor, that's often because either option will lead to a similar long-term health outcome.

A lumpectomy is commonly known as breast conservation surgery because it keeps most of the breast intact, whereas a mastectomy removes the entire breast. Regardless of which procedure you choose, the risk of breast cancer recurrence is roughly the same.

Lumpectomy is a treatment option for early-stage breast cancer. Compared with a mastectomy, it's less invasive and tends to have a quicker recovery. It also can help preserve the cosmetic appearance and sensation of the breast. Your healthcare professional will recommend radiation therapy after a lumpectomy to reduce the risk of breast cancer returning in the breast.

A mastectomy removes the whole breast. In many cases, radiation therapy is not needed after mastectomy. Individuals with a genetic predisposition for breast cancer, such as the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, may opt for a mastectomy as a preventive measure following their diagnosis.

After a mastectomy, some women choose to forgo reconstructive surgery, opting for what is called an aesthetic flat closure. There can be many reasons for this, including wanting to limit future surgeries, reducing risks and complications, and desiring a faster return to daily life and activities.

For other patients, having a breast mound is part of how they identify as women. Multiple types of breast reconstruction procedures are available following either a lumpectomy or mastectomy. Breast reconstruction surgery can occur at the same time as breast cancer surgery, or you can plan your reconstruction weeks, months or years after treatment.

The surgical technique and cosmetic outcomes after mastectomy and reconstruction have improved over the past 20 years. More women can keep their nipple and areolar complex and, in many cases, a procedure can be performed to help improve sensation to the nipple and areolar complex.

Breast density also could be a factor in your decision-making. About half of people who have screening mammograms have dense breasts. Dense breast tissue is harder to see through on a mammogram image. Having dense breast tissue should not affect one's decision to undergo a mastectomy or lumpectomy.

However, dense breast tissue may influence the need for additional tests before surgery, such as an MRI. An MRI looks for abnormal blood flow within the breast and can "see through" dense tissue. This may help surgeons better determine the extent of disease and guide them in the removal.

Ultimately, determining the option that is best for you is a nuanced decision that can be based on a variety of factors, including cancer-based reasons, family history and genetics, and peace of mind. Choosing which surgical route to take is deeply personal, and there is no one "best choice" for every woman. After careful consideration and consultation with your healthcare team, you should make the decision that you determine is best for you, based on the specifics of your cancer and your individual needs and preferences.

– Sarah McLaughlin, M.D., Surgical Oncology, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida

Dreamstime

Medical debt is one of the sneakiest ways financial stress shows up in people's lives. According to Kaiser Family Foundation's (KFF) analysis of government data, Americans owe at least U.S. $220 billion in medical debt. Approximately 14 million adults owe more than $1,000, and another three million carry medical debt over $10,000.

Protect your health and your wealth

FIVE TIPS TO BEAT MEDICAL DEBT

By BERNADETTE JOY
Bankrate.com (TNS)

Even though I have enough saved for early retirement, I still worry. As someone with lifelong chronic conditions, I know all too well how healthcare costs can creep up, even when everything else seems under control.

Medical debt is one of the sneakiest ways financial stress shows up in people's lives. According to Kaiser Family Foundation's (KFF) analysis of government data, Americans owe at least US $220 billion in medical debt. Approximately 14 million adults owe more than $1,000, and another three million carry medical debt over $10,000.

And the stress around money, and especially healthcare, is very real. According to Bankrate's Money and Mental Health Survey, 43 percent of U.S. adults say money negatively affects their mental health at least some of the time.

Understanding your health care coverage is an essential part of a healthy financial plan for you and your family. Here are six practical tips to protect both your health and your wealth.

1 Check your insurance coverage carefully

Don't wait until you're in a hospital bed or at the doctor's office to find out what your plan actually covers.

Before any procedure, call your provider and ask about deductibles, copays, coinsurance and whether your doctor is in-network. A 10-minute phone call could potentially save you thousands of dollars.

Recently, my primary care doctor referred me for a CT scan. When I reviewed my coverage, I found that it would cost me over $1,000 out of pocket. Because I looked into this before my procedure date, I had time to investigate alternatives and avoid a nasty surprise.

Insurance terms to know

■ **Deductible:** The amount you're required to pay out-of-pocket before your insurance starts sharing costs

■ **Copay:** A set fee you pay at the time of service (like $30 for a doctor's visit)

■ **Coinsurance:** The percentage you're responsible for after meeting your deductible (for example, your plan might pay 80 percent while you pay 20 percent).

■ **Out-of-pocket maximum:** The most you'll ever pay in a year for covered services. Once you hit this number, your insurance covers 100 percent of covered care for the rest of the year.

Many people don't understand how these terms translate into real-life situations, so here's an example. Imagine you need surgery that costs $5,000:

■ According to your plan, your deductible is $1,500. You pay that first.

■ If your plan has a $50 copay for the hospital visit, that gets added too.

■ After that, your insurance kicks in and you pay 20 percent coinsurance on the remaining $3,500, or $700.

■ Your total out-of-pocket cost for this surgery would be $2,250 ($1,500 deductible + $700 coinsurance + $50 copay).

2 Match your 'Keep Calm fund' to your deductible in a high-yield savings account

You've probably heard about the importance of having an emergency fund. I like to call mine a 'Keep Calm Fund' because that's precisely what it does in a crisis – it gives me peace of mind so I can stay level-headed. At a minimum, set aside the amount of your deductible; having your out-of-pocket maximum saved can be a long-term goal. That way, if a worst-case scenario hits, you can cover your medical costs without spiraling into debt or panic.

Using the $5,000 surgery example above, having at least $1,500 in your Keep Calm Fund means you can cover the deductible right away.

The average annual out-of-pocket healthcare cost for employees was over $1,100 in 2024. If you have more saved, you'll have breathing room for coinsurance, copays or other unexpected costs that may arise.

Keep your funds in a high-yield savings account so they can earn interest for you in the meantime.

3 Read every line item and ask about discounts

I can't emphasize this enough: Pore over your medical bills with a fine-toothed comb, and speak directly with billing departments or your pharmacy about any discrepancies. Mistakes happen all the time, including incorrect codes, duplicate charges or bills for services you didn't receive. I reviewed some physical therapy bills recently and found duplicate charges that would have cost me several hundred dollars.

Plus, discounts, subsidies or assistance programs are often available but aren't widely advertised or readily apparent. For example, one of my prescriptions ordinarily costs thousands of dollars a month, but the pharmacy helped me find a copay assistance program that covered most of it.

Asking those questions and pushing back when something looks off can make a huge difference.

4 Avoid credit cards, use HSAs or similar plans instead

Credit cards are often the most expensive way to cover healthcare costs. Unless you can pay them off immediately, interest charges can balloon a $1,000 bill into thousands more over time.

A better option? If you have access, consider using a Health Savings Account (HSA) or a Flexible Spending Account (FSA).

Contributions go in tax-free, withdrawals for qualified medical expenses are tax-free, and with HSAs, your money can even grow tax-free if you invest it.

That's a triple advantage that even medical credit cards will never give you. HSAs and FSAs help you save for medical costs in advance while reducing your taxable income to help you save at tax time.

5 Consider medical tourism

Here's a tip you don't hear often: consider looking beyond U.S. borders for medical care.

If you're able and willing, medical tourism, especially for certain elective or screening services, can be a safe, affordable option to avoid medical debt.

After reviewing research and speaking with American expats in Portugal and Spain, I confirmed that many of our healthcare costs are inflated and don't necessarily guarantee higher-quality care simply because it's American.

During a recent trip to Malaysia, my husband and I received comprehensive medical screenings, including labs, imaging and consultations. The appointments were all scheduled for a single day, and our total out-of-pocket cost was less than $800. In the U.S., the same services could easily cost several times that and take weeks to complete.

But don't rely on second-hand information and anecdotal reports. Call these medical centers directly and have your list of questions and concerns ready. You may just find a smoother, less expensive process.

Final thoughts: Advocating for your own health is a worthwhile fight

Lastly, but most importantly, don't take no for a final answer on insurance denials. Insurance companies often deny valid claims with the expectation that patients won't argue or will eventually give up. According to a KFF survey, 18 percent of insured adults reported experiencing a denied claim in the past year. Among those who use health services the most, that figure jumps to 27 percent.

Steps you can take

■ Read the denial letter carefully. It should reference the policy clause or term used to deny your claim.

■ Gather documentation, including doctor's notes, lab results and referrals to support your case.

■ File an appeal. Many denials are overturned on appeal, but only if you challenge them.

■ Enlist help if needed, including patient advocacy groups or consumer assistance programs. You don't have to fight alone.

In my experience, my medical providers have been willing to help me fight denied claims. Think of these efforts like preventive care for your financial plan.

A little preparation, a questioning and curious mindset and a strong financial cushion can make a world of difference. The healthier your money habits, the less likely you are to need a financial emergency room.

Soup is a cool-weather mainstay in many kitchens. A big batch means not only dinner that night, but also several lunches throughout the week. It's a forgiving dish that encourages flavor exploration, and a stellar choice when odds and ends are lurking in the refrigerator.

Ozgur Coskun / Dreamstime / TNS

5 simple soup recipes to work into your cooler-weather rotation

By NICOLE HVIDSTEN
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

A friend once said there's no such thing as soup season — it should be enjoyed year-round. As someone who just happily ordered a cup of chicken wild rice soup on a 90-degree day, I agree.

But when the air finally does turn crisp, it reignites the desire to cook all cozy. Dutch ovens and stockpots stay front and center, and we start rotating in all the recipes that have been on summer hiatus.

Soup is a cool-weather mainstay in many kitchens. A big batch means not only dinner that night, but also several lunches throughout the week. It's a forgiving dish that encourages flavor exploration – and a stellar choice when odds and ends are lurking in the refrigerator.

These five recipes from recent cookbooks run the gamut from spicy chorizo and velvety barley and lentils to a 30-minute turkey soup for a busy weeknight. There is one common ingredient, though: They are all best when enjoyed with a big piece of crusty bread.

Chicken, Chorizo and Butter Bean Soup

Serves 4

From "The Farm Kitchen" by Abby Allen, who writes: "I almost wonder if I can get away with calling this recipe a soup. It's somewhere between a soup and a stew – somewhere very delicious." The best time to make this recipe is after roasting a chicken; the last scraps of meat can be shredded from the bone and used in place of the chicken thighs. The carcass can then be popped into a pot and left to bubble away. (Kyle Books, 2025)

3 to 4 skin-on chicken thighs
Drizzle of canola oil
6 1/2 oz. cooking chorizo, sliced or cubed
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 sprigs of rosemary, leaves picked and chopped
2 sprigs of thyme, leaves picked and chopped
3 bay leaves
1 tsp. smoked paprika
4 1/4 c. chicken stock, warmed
1 tbsp. flour
1 to 2 tbsp. butter, softened
7 oz. canned butter beans, drained
Scant ½ c. heavy cream
Flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Place the chicken thighs on a sheet pan, season generously with salt, then roast in the oven for 25 minutes, until golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Once cooled, roughly chop the chicken, skin and all.

Set a cast-iron pan over medium–high heat and drizzle in a little oil. Once sizzling, add the chorizo and stir for a few minutes until it has crisped and caramelized. Reduce the heat, then add the onion, garlic, herbs and a pinch of salt. Once the onions have softened and the herbs have become fragrant, add the paprika and allow it to toast for a minute. Add the chicken thigh meat along with half the stock. Bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer and leave it to bubble away for around 15 minutes.

Make a roux by combining the flour and butter in a small bowl until a smooth paste has formed. Mix the roux into the pan, then stir in the remaining stock and simmer for another 10 minutes.

Tip the butter beans into the pan and simmer for around 5 to 6 minutes, then add the cream and adjust the seasoning to taste.

Serve in warmed bowls with a generous twist of black pepper over the top and crusty bread on the side.

Roasted Red Pepper Soup

Serves 6

I grow red peppers. And onions. And potatoes. And garlic. And carrots. And tomatoes. And we tap our maples for maple syrup. All of them are easy enough to get from a grocer, but growing even one of these elements will bring a depth of flavor and sweetness that you just can't get elsewhere. The next best thing is to gather the ingredients at a farmers market, when everything is at the peak of ripeness, and make batches of this soup and freeze for cozy winter meals – served with a slab of crusty bread. From "My Harvest Kitchen," by Gesine Bullock-Prado (Countryman Press, 2025).

6 large red bell peppers, about 2 1/2 lb.
2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
1 large sweet onion, roughly chopped
Salt
1 large carrot, peeled and cut into 1/4-in. rounds
2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
2 large paste tomatoes (canned San Marzano or fresh), roughly chopped
2 large cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. anchovy paste
1 large russet potato (1 lb.), peeled and cut into ½-in. cubes
2 quarts low-sodium chicken stock
Leaves from 4 thyme sprigs
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp. pure maple syrup
Toasted bread cubes, for optional garnish

Place an oven rack in the highest position. Preheat the oven to 500 degrees or the highest temperature possible. Line a sheet pan with aluminum foil; set aside.

Core the peppers and remove all the seeds. Place the peppers skin-side up on the prepared sheet pan, leaving a few inches between them. Roast for 20 minutes, or until the pepper skins are charred on top. Remove from the oven and, using tongs, flip the peppers to expose the undersides that haven't been roasted; return the pan to the oven and roast for 20 minutes more.

Take the fully charred peppers from the oven and immediately bundle up the foil around the peppers to steam them. Allow to cool, wrapped up, at room temperature, then slip off and discard their skins and roughly chop the peppers. Place in a bowl and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onion and season lightly with salt. Cook until just translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the carrot and cook, stirring often, until just tender, about 5 minutes.

Add the vinegar, scrape up any fond (the caramelized bits stuck to the pan) on the bottom of the pan, then add the chopped tomato and cook for about 5 minutes more to soften and reduce. Add the garlic, ginger paste, anchovy paste and chopped red peppers and just heat through for a minute or two.

Add the cubed potato, chicken stock and thyme, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer over low heat until the potato is fork-tender.

Carefully transfer the contents to a large blender and add the maple syrup. Process until very smooth. (Alternatively, you can use an immersion blender and process soup right in the pan.) You can serve the soup in the slightly rustic state, or run it through a fine-mesh sieve for a more velvety texture. Serve the soup hot with a drizzle of olive oil and top with toasted bread, if desired.

Quick Italian Turkey Soup

Serves 6

This light soup is still filling – it's loaded with pasta, beans and a bunch of veggies to keep you warm and feeling great. From "30-Minute Meals with Six Sisters' Stuff: 100+ Quick and Easy Meals the Whole Family Will Love" (Shadow Mountain, 2025).

1/2 c. dry rotini pasta
11/2 tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 (1- lb.) package ground turkey
1 tbsp. Italian seasoning
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 (15-oz.) can Italian-style diced tomatoes
1 (15-oz.) can Great Northern white beans, drained and rinsed
1 c. shredded carrots
1 zucchini, thinly sliced
4 c. chicken broth
1 tbsp. dried parsley
1 tsp. dried oregano
5 c. finely chopped fresh spinach
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

Cook rotini noodles according to the package directions, and set aside when finished.

While the noodles are cooking, heat olive oil in a large stockpot over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, ground turkey, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Mix together until turkey is completely cooked through.

Add the tomatoes with their juices, beans, carrots, zucchini, broth, parsley and oregano.

Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, or until carrots and zucchini are cooked.

Add the spinach to the stockpot, and stir it all together until the spinach is wilted. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Add in cooked rotini and stir it all together, then top each serving with Parmesan cheese.

Lentil and Barley Soup

Serves 8

This comforting winter soup is a favorite of one Jacques Pépin and could be a hearty meal in itself when served with a beautiful, crusty bread, a glass of wine and a piece of cheese. It's more economical to make the recipe in larger batches and freeze what is not needed. When you are ready to eat the soup again, thaw it, heat it through, and enjoy a second time. From "The Art of Jacques Pépin" (Harvest, 2025).

1 lb. dried lentils, washed and drained
4 quarts chicken or beef stock
1 leek (8 oz.), cut into 1/2-in. pieces and washed (about 3 c.)
1 large onion (8 oz.), peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
2 hot Italian sausages (about 5 oz. total), cut into 1/2-in. pieces
2 carrots (6 oz.), peeled and cut into 1/2-in. pieces
1/2 c. (4 oz.) pearl barley
5 large cloves garlic, peeled, crushed, and coarsely chopped
1 tbsp. herbes de Provence
1 tbsp. salt
1/2 tsp. Tabasco sauce, optional
1/2 c. grated Swiss cheese, optional

Place the lentils, stock, leeks, onion, sausages, carrots, barley, garlic, herbes de Provence and salt in a large pot and bring the mixture to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to very low, cover, and cook gently for 1 ½ hours, or until the barley is cooked.

Emulsify the soup with a handheld immersion blender for 8 to 10 seconds to make the mixture somewhat creamy, but still chunky. (Alternatively, place 2 cups of the soup in a blender or food processor and process for 20 seconds. Combine the purée with the remaining soup.)

Add Tabasco, if using, to the soup. Serve in bowls, garnished with the cheese, if desired. This soup tends to thicken as it cools. When reheating leftovers, thin, if necessary, by adding water.

Mum's Loving Leek and Potato Soup

Serves 4

From "Cooking Fast and Slow" by Natalia Rudin, who writes: "It might sound like a cliché, but my mum is my superhero and her leek and potato soup heals me in more ways than I can put into words. My re-creation will never be as good as hers, but I've given it my best shot." (Ten Speed Press, 2025)

1 to 2 tbsp. olive oil
3 leeks, roughly chopped
1/2 white onion, roughly chopped
1 tsp. fennel seeds
1/4 tsp. grated nutmeg
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
1 large potato (no need to peel)
4 c. vegetable stock
1 to 2 tbsp. butter
Salt and black pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan, then add the leeks, onion, fennel seeds, nutmeg and garlic. Put the lid on and sweat them down over low heat for 10 to 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the potato in half, lay it flat side down, and cut into thin slices.

Add the sliced potato to the saucepan and cook for 5 minutes, until soft, then add the vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, then use an immersion blender to blend until silky smooth. Stir in the butter.

Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve with warm crusty bread.

ENTERTAINMENT

Robby Krieger celebrates the Doors 60th anniversary with all-star band

By PETER LARSEN
The Orange County Register (TNS)

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Sixty years after Robby Krieger auditioned to join the Doors, the guitarist still marvels at the legacy of the band and the music he made with singer Jim Morrison, keyboardist Ray Manzarek and drummer John Densmore.

"That's kind of crazy," Krieger, 79, says on a recent phone call. "I actually didn't play Doors music for a while after Jim died [in 1971]. Probably 10 years, maybe 15. After Jim was gone, I figured, 'It's over.'"

The surviving Doors released a pair of albums as a trio before ending the band in January 1973. Krieger formed his own bands, often playing jazz fusion in addition to rock and roll starting in the '70s, and continued playing through the decades that followed, even as he noticed a revival of interest in the Doors.

"The book came out, Danny Sugarman's book," Krieger says of the 1980 Doors biography, "No One Here Gets Out Alive." "It took a while to make me realize that it's not over. Like an Oliver Stone movie about the band ("The Doors" in 1991).

"So around the year 2000, Ray and I got back together and started playing the Doors music," he continues. "Before that, there were tribute bands playing it. That was kind of weird, but it showed us that there was interest still.

Densmore never agreed with Manzarek and Krieger about reforming the Doors, going so far as to sue his two bandmates at one point. Manzarek died in 2013.

Krieger continued to revisit songs from the Doors catalog, which includes such hits as "Light My Fire," "People Are Strange," "Hello, I Love You," and "Riders on the Storm." And this year, in honor of the 60th anniversary of the Doors forming in Los Angeles in 1965, he's played almost all of it.

Starting in March, Krieger and his band played a monthly residency at the Whisky A Go Go, the West Hollywood club where the Doors first broke out as stars on the Sunset Strip. Each month featured a different Doors album played in full – the self-titled debut followed by "L.A. Woman," "Strange Days," "Waiting for the Sun," and "The Soft Parade" – as well as hits from across the band's catalog.

On Thursday, Oct. 30, Krieger wraps up the 60th anniversary celebration at the Greek Theatre with hits and a performance of "Morrison Hotel," the last of the six Doors albums on which Morrison sang.

In addition to his band, which includes his son Waylon Krieger, the night features an all-star lineup that includes Billy Idol and Steve Stevens, Perry Farrell of Jane's Addiction, John Doe of X, Greg Gonzalez of Cigarettes After Sex, Steven Adler of Guns N' Roses and more.

In an interview edited for length and clarity, Krieger talked about his early memories with the Doors, why Columbia Records dropped the band before Elektra signed them, what it was like relearning six albums of Doors songs, many of which the band had never played live, and more.

Q: In 1965, you were the last of the four to join. What do you remember about how that happened?

A: I knew John from high school, and we had played some music together a number of times. Even though I was at UCLA, and so were Jim and Ray, I didn't really know them. They were in that film school, and I was just in the regular stay-out-of-the-Army school. [He laughs]

Q: That's a good school to be in.

A: It was at the time. So anyway, John, I don't know how he met Ray exactly, but he did. At that time Ray's brothers were in the band and Jim would come down and sit in once in a while, because he did like the music even before the Doors.

Ray and Jim didn't really know me yet, so they were having people try out on guitar, and I think I was the second one. First one was a guy named Billy Wolf who I knew as a guitar player. We had taken flamenco lessons together. I was the second. The first song we played was "Moonlight Drive," which I used the slide on, and that seemed to nail it down. It was the one song.

Q: Once you were in the band, how long was it before you started that maybe it was going to work out?

A: It was pretty much right away. One thing was that they had a record deal already with Columbia Records, which was pretty cool back in those days. Unfortunately, that kind of fell through. I could tell you how that happened if you want.

Q: Yeah, sure.

A: Billy James was the manager type, and he was the one that got the Columbia deal going. At the time, they would sign a whole bunch of groups, every month pretty much, and they would see if any of them stuck around.

We thought, "Hey man, this is going to happen," you know. Because we had already got some free stuff. Columbia owned Vox at the time, and Ray had got the Vox organ, which is pretty cool. Got a few amps.

Billy said, "Hey, I'm going in tomorrow to meet the top brass. Hopefully, we'll nail this down." So Jim wanted to go. He insisted on coming to the meeting. Which was not a good idea. [He laughs] He took a bunch of acid that day.

After the meeting, Jim was beaming. He was like, "Wow, I (bleepin') impressed those guys!" [He laughs again] The next day, we were dropped.

Q: Well, it worked out eventually.

A: But that was a big deal, to have a record deal. That's really why I wanted to join up. And the fact that I knew John. So we really didn't have a record company until about eight months later, when we were playing at the Whisky and Elektra Records came by and they dug it. They were cool. They were a small company, but they were dedicated.

Q: I want to ask you about the Whisky, because that's where the reputation of the band really started to take off.

A: The Whisky was really the place to play in those days. Before that, we were playing this place up the street from the Whisky called the London Fog. I don't know why it was called the London Fog, but the guy there was Jesse James, who liked us.

The first night we played there, we invited all of our college buddies and friends to come down, so it was like 200 people or something, and so we were hired. Of course, the next day nobody came. [He laughs]

But eventually the scout from the Whisky came and saw us, Ronnie Haran and after she saw us a few times, she invited us to play at the Whisky. We got the spot as the house band, and we played there six nights a week, two sets, three, I forget. That was fun. That was really good for us, because you play night after night and you really can work on your songs in front of a crowd and see what turns them on.

Q: Kind of like rock and roll boot camp?

A: Exactly. And the songs, they totally changed by the time the Whisky was over. Luckily, we had gotten the record deal with Elektra, and we did our first album. It was particularly a lot of that we played on stage at the Whisky.

Q: So the Doors would open for the bigger bands or touring bands that came to L.A.?

A: Yeah, that was pretty good about the Whisky. We got to see all these big-time groups that were headliners. The first one was Them, Van Morrison. They did "Gloria" and all that stuff. The last night we played with them, we all got to get on stage together and do "Gloria." There are pictures of that somewhere. The two Morrisons, Van and Jim.

Q: I've read that the Doors got so good so fast that you made it hard for bands to follow you.

A: It wasn't really like that. We weren't trying to blow them off the stage or anything. It was more like how we got to see them in person. There were a lot of great bands. Buffalo Springfield, a lot of these bands that were about a year ahead of us. The Byrds.

Q: Was Love ahead of you?

A: They were. In fact, Arthur Lee lived near us in Laurel Canyon, so we were pretty close with them.

Q: For the album shows at the Whisky this year, that's a lot of songs to know how to play.

A: Tell me about it.

Q: A lot of rehearsing?

A: Yeah, but it was fun. You know, a lot of those songs I hadn't played in 60 years. I really had forgotten how cool some of the songs were because a lot of them we never really played on stage for some reason. The first songs we had written, Jim and Ray had written, were basically our Whisky set, along with other people's songs.

Then we started writing other new ones; I started writing some myself, and Jim and I started writing together. That turned out to be when we got ready to do our first album, so we had too many songs. The first two albums were pretty much the songs we played at the Whisky.

Q: Were those first two albums easier to prepare for this year?

A: Not necessarily. I hadn't even thought of doing some of those deeper cuts in person. I'd never done it. So it was nice to go back. I never realized how great some of those songs are, if I say so myself.

Q: Are there a few examples of ones you'd never played that you sort of rediscovered this year?

A: Well, there's a couple we've just been practicing from "Morrison Hotel." A couple of songs that I played in drop D tuning. Let's see, what the hell are they? I've got to look at the list, can you hang on?

Q: No problem.

A: OK, I'll tell you [some of] the set list real quick. "Waiting for the Sun," that's one we had never done in person. "You Make Me Real," I think we did do that song. "Peace Frog." We did that one. "Indian Summer." We'd never done that live – maybe we did it at the Whisky? That was the first song we ever recorded.

When we went to Sunset Sound, we'd never recorded in a real studio. And we'd just written "Indian Summer," so it was like, "OK, let's try it." We did it like real, real soft. It was like putting your foot in the water to see how cold. And it just didn't sound that good to us, so we didn't use it on the first album. Waited until the fifth album. But that song is so cool. Probably going to use it in the set from now on.

Also "Ship of Fools" and "Land Ho." Those are the ones in drop D tuning. Those are really cool. I don't know why I never played them. Probably because I was too lazy to retune my guitar. [He laughs]

Q: At the Greek, you've got a lot of guest musicians to sing or sit in with the band. How'd you put that together?

A: A lot of them I have known for a long time or I'd played with before, like Billy Idol. Perry Farrell. [Guitarist] Orianthi, she's going to sit in. A couple of them I didn't know. Deryck Whibley [from Sum 41], Greg Gonzalez [from Cigarettes After Sex]. Do you know Fantastic Negrito?

Q: I saw him open for Eric Clapton at the Forum a few years ago. He was cool there.

A: I haven't met him yet, but I think he's gonna come and rehearse with us next week.

Q: John Densmore doesn't play music much anymore, but will he be there in any capacity?

A: He's got a funeral to go to. His wife's mother passed away. So he won't be there unless he can get away. He might get there on the last song or something, hopefully.

Q: After the Greek show? What's the next year look like?

A: We're gonna do another thing at the Whisky, probably five or six shows again, and we're gonna play at the Love Ride next month. They've been doing them for years. We did the first one about 40 years ago.

I hope to do something maybe for New Year's Eve. So we ain't going anywhere.

Robby Krieger performs on stage the Asian Hall Of Fame's Induction Ceremony 2022 at Alex Theatre on Nov. 12, 2022, in Glendale, California.
Alberto E. Rodriguez / Getty Images / TNS

MOVIE REVIEW

Apple TV+ / TNS

Anne Meara, left, and Jerry Stiller with their children Ben and Amy in an archival image from "Stiller & Meara: Nothing is Lost."

How we remember our parents, and ourselves, is at the heart of Ben Stiller's dreamlike documentary

By ROBERT LLOYD
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Ben Stiller has made a lovely, dreamlike film about his parents, the comedian-actors Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara, which is also a film about himself, his sister, Amy Stiller, and his own fatherhood as reflected back by his children and his wife, the actor Christine Taylor. Released last week on Apple TV, "Stiller & Meara: Nothing Is Lost" is a show business story, in large part, but will be emotionally familiar to anyone who has had the occasion to wonder about their parents' lives, in their parents' absence.

Though both had set out to be actors – "I carried Eleanora Duse's life under one arm," says Anne, "and 'An Actor Prepares,' Stanislavski, under the other" – Jerry had been thinking of getting into comedy when he met Anne. They married in 1954, but it wasn't until 1963 that the conjoined career of Stiller and Maera took off, with an appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show." They might play the last two people on Earth meeting for the first time, or an Irish girl and a Jewish boy matched by computer dating. He was a fretful perfectionist who would endlessly rehearse; Anne was naturally funny; she flowed.

As documentary subjects go, the Stillers were not remarkably dysfunctional – no violence, no skeletons – past the not uncommon situation of parents whose work, or fixation on work, often took them away from their kids, physically or mentally, with the added fillip of that work having made them famous. (There are references to Anne's drinking, which bothered Jerry, but this is not a hole the film runs down, and there's nothing here to suggest it diminished her life or work.) As different people with different goals – "My mom wanted to be happy independent of performing," says Ben, "and I think for my dad performing was so important to him it was part of his happiness" – there was tension, but they loved each other, and they loved their kids, and stayed married for 62 years, until Anne's death in 2015.

Stiller frames the film with his and Amy's return to the Upper West Side apartment where they were raised in order to clear it out to be sold, providing the opportunity to see what their parents had left behind. (Jerry died in 2020.) And it was a lot – nothing is lost if nothing is thrown away. There are love letters, diaries, scripts, manuscripts. (Anne: "I think Jerry has a need to keep his name going and for some reason he thinks that when we check out and pass over that the Smithsonian institute is going to want his memorabilia.") Jerry had a habit, amounting to a compulsion, of documenting their life on film and tape; some of their conversations, and arguments, would turn into routines. ("Where does the act end and the marriage begin?" Anne wonders.) Raised voices in another room might be rehearsing or fighting. One routine consisted of escalating declarations of hate: "I hated you before I met you." "I hated you before you were born."

They quit playing nightclubs in 1970 (they drove her "meshuggah"), but remained in public view – in guest appearances, game shows and talk shows, where, unlike the highly managed appearances of today, they seemed ready to dish the dirt on themselves, providing Ben Stiller with material for this film. And they went to work as actors, each amassing a long list of screen and stage appearances. Jerry, of course, is now best known from "Seinfeld," where he played George's father, Frank Costanza, and "The King of Queens," acting in nearly 200 episodes.

Much of it has to do with Ben and Amy as children of famous people, of family vacations that became working vacations, and growing up on display. In one clip from "The Mike Douglas Show," the siblings perform "Chopsticks" as a screechy violin duet. Young Ben, already interested in film and asked by an interviewer if his parents will feature in his movies, says that they won't: "I'll be making adventure or a murder or something like that, but never a comedy. I don't like comedy."

> **'Stiller & Meara: Nothing Is Lost'**
>
> **Rating:** TV-MA
> **How to watch:** Apple TV+

We get glimpses of Stiller's own prolific career – in comedy, mostly, as it turned out – as well as confessions of his own failings as a family man. (His children, Quinn and Ella, get to have their good-humored but penetrating say, as does Taylor, from whom he separated in 2017, and with whom he reunited during the pandemic.) But there's no evident resentment on the part of Ben and Amy, just curiosity and self-examination as adults whose own lives have taught them something about being adults, amid the knowledge that their parents had parents, too, and some of their imperfections became imperfections of their own.

Both Anne and Jerry had come from dark places. "Their lives were always reaching for the light," says the playwright John Guare, whose black comedy "The House of Blue Leaves" Anne performed in off-Broadway. "Why don't you become a stagehand?" Jerry's father told him when Jerry first told him of his ambition. "Where do you get off trying to be Eddie Cantor?" Anne's mother died by suicide. "Your father was kind of a saint, you know," Christopher Walken tells Ben.

Stiller's approach is musical; his assembly of clips and photos is musical – poetic, not prosaic. He ends his film with a conversation between Jerry and his aged father, Willie, cut to a montage of the family through time.

"Isn't this better than anything, just being alive?" says Jerry. "When we go, we'll go together, you and me"

Willie: "Yeah, OK, hold hands and everything else."

"You'll take me to shows again when we get up there?"

"Yeah, when I go I'll take you any place. … What is this?"

"It's a tape recorder. ... Whatever you say is on that tape. They'll hear you forever. You'll never be lost."

And we see young Ben, filming a camera that's filming him, as his father steps in behind him.

MOVIE REVIEW

Animated flick *'Stitch Head'* a charming spookfest for kids

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service (TNS)

Guillermo del Toro isn't the only filmmaker with a take on Mary Shelley's classic Frankenstein's monster tale this Halloween season. Enter "Stitch Head," an animated film from British animation studio Aniventure, written and directed by Steve Hudson, adapted from the Guy Bass graphic novel.

Del Toro's "Frankenstein" may be the most faithful and frightening adaptation of Shelley's book, but "Stitch Head" proves that there are lessons of all kinds – and for all ages – to be wrung from that text. It's actually quite remarkable, the social commentary that Hudson elicits from this charming, but slight, spookfest for kids.

Welcome to the village of Grubber Nubbin, where a traveling circus freak show is finding no purchase with the locals, who know that the real terrors reside in Castle Grotteskew up the road. There, an eccentric Professor (Rob Brydon) has animated so many monsters and creatures, he's filled up a whole dormitory.

Enter Stitch Head (Asa Butterfield), the Professor's melancholy assistant, who has been stitched together and animated by the Professor's own hand. Stitch Head is an Igor-type, but his duties involve onboarding the new monsters, reading them the fine print about their condition, and showing an orientation film that cautions against rampages and advises the monsters to stay quiet and unseen, in order to avoid angry mobs.

Briarcliff Entertainment / TNS

A scene from "Stitch Head," an animated film from British animation studio Aniventure, written and directed by Steve Hudson, adapted from the Guy Bass graphic novel.

Ergo, he's the head boy and primary caretaker of a bunch of terrifying-looking sweetie pies, to whom he reads bedtime stories that underline the castle's main message about staying out of sight and out of mind.

A cheery new addition, an enthusiastic cyclops dubbed Creature (Joel Fry), takes a shine to Stitch Head, his only friend, and has questions about his provenance that Stitch Head can't answer. Stuck in his cold and lonely castle, Stitch Head has the same questions, and he yearns for connection, yearns to be seen, acknowledged.

Well, there's this circus ringmaster, Fulbert Freakfinder (Seth Usdenov) who is simply dying to get in the castle and see for himself what's inside. Soon, Stitch Head finds himself being seen – as the main attraction in the freak show.

"Stitch Head" follows the classic hero's journey of a sheltered young person leaving their cloistered home for the first time, discovering something about themself, and returning home renewed in their own empowerment and sense of self. For Stitch Head, that means joining the circus.

> **'Stitch Head'**
>
> ★★★
>
> **MPA rating:** PG (for action, thematic elements and mild rude humor)
> **Running time:** 1:29
> **How to watch:** In theaters

If the neglectful Professor exploited Stitch Head for his labor and care, Freakfinder exploits him for similarly capitalistic aims – cold hard cash, in the form of ticket fare for the villagers to lay their eyes on Stitch Head's visage in horror. Like many people of the modern era, our young hero mistakes celebrity for adoration, fandom for love. People see him, in the way he desires the Professor might, but it's not for the right reasons, and Stitch Head can't discern that yet.

But the devoted Creature sees Stitch Head for who he is, and is determined to save him and return back to the safety of the castle. Just when Stitch Head thinks that the seemingly inclusive freak show denizens might be his pals, he discovers they're just an angry mob too, and the only answer is to embrace his own monstrousness along with his monster pals – to take up space and attention and make some noise.

Within this melancholy and morbid tale are some excellent lessons for kids about being themselves, accepting those who are different, and really seeing people for who they are. Plus, some anti-capitalist, pro-worker indoctrination never hurts.

"Stitch Head" is also a treat to behold, with some beautiful imagery of warm candlelight in the cold castle, inventive creature design and a lively style that incorporates familiar influences from old-fashioned circus and monster movies. Butterfield delivers a performance that is heartbreakingly tender, especially in Stitch Head's friendship with the ebullient Creature, his total opposite.

This touching and somewhat grotesque story is the perfect gateway for younger kids to dabble in more spooky, Gothic content, as well as to take in the true lessons of Shelley's original monster tale. With this under their belts, they'll be gearing up for del Toro's "Frankenstein" (and "Nightmare Alley") in no time.

Photos by Terrence Antonio James / Chicago Tribune / TNS

An art piece called "A HOLE," a conceptual piece featuring a pane of glass with a single bullet hole, is in a retrospective exhibit of work by Yoko Ono at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago on Oct. 17.

'Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind' at MCA Chicago upends assumptions

By **CHRISTOPHER BORRELLI**
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

CHICAGO — First things first, before you hear about the new exhibit "Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind" at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, a story: In late 1971 Ono took out an ad in the Village Voice for her upcoming "one-woman show" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The show would run two weeks. The exhibition catalogs cost $1. What was unusual about this was that, as far as MOMA was concerned, there was no Yoko Ono show. Ono had never exhibited work at MOMA and was not being asked to exhibit now.

But on Dec. 1, on the opening date of her "show," Ono had a man wearing a sandwich board parade in front of the museum, explaining: Ono released thousands of flies in MOMA, each one scented with a perfume worn by the artist; a photographer has also been tasked with documenting the path of the flies. This was not a prank. Ono had indeed released a jug of flies at MOMA, albeit outside, in the sculpture garden out back.

MOMA, forced to respond, taped a copy of the ad in its ticket window with a note:

"This is NOT here."

Except, of course, it was.

Ono had, without being invited, shown her work at MOMA. There's a lovely, hilarious short film at the MCA's "Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind" documenting the responses of MOMA visitors to this elaborate unofficial exhibit. They come across like a chorus of how people have always responded to Ono. A child gets it right away. A woman says she loves Ono's husband, John Lennon, but doesn't know how she feels about Ono. One man admires Ono's audacity: "The entire world can be a show," he says. And an older British woman says, well, this is all "a bit bonkers," wouldn't you say?

But she smiles in a way that suggests, bonkers or not, I am smiling.

Yoko Ono is 92. By the time the MCA's exhibit closes in late February, she'll be 93. She made a long life of ignoring what you wanted. She was a classically trained singer in Japan, and studied opera, but became better known for atonal wailing. She was, she is, a cultural punchline, but spent seven decades creating a body of work so original and challenging, and eventually touching and influential, the joke is really on the know-nothings (who never will know). Fittingly, this new Ono retrospective that just opened is epic but intimate, impossibly earnest but funny and full of irony, without a single wink.

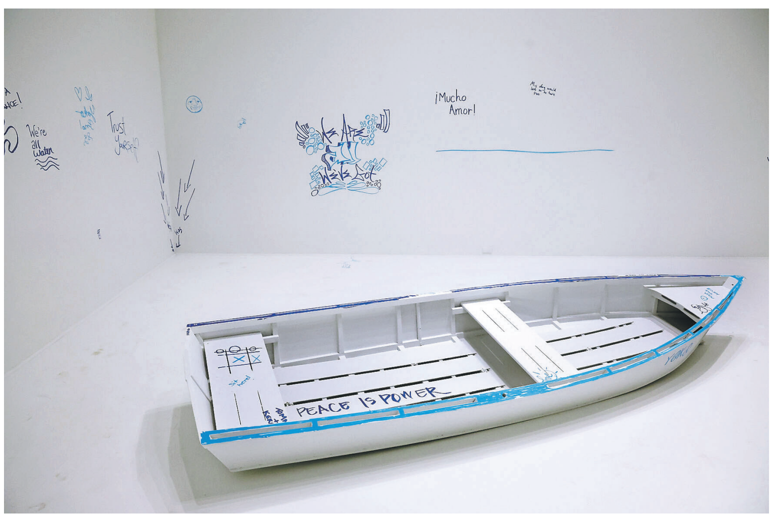
It upends assumptions – just admit, you have them.

And yet, though it never indulges in defensiveness, feel free to read it as a reply – 50 years too late – to every crack directed at Ono since 1969, when she married Lennon. You walk out wanting to punch anyone who said Yoko Ono broke up their favorite band.

You'll give peace a chance, later.

Which, yeah, is an idiotic response to a thoughtful exhibit of a body of work seeking global unity. But then "Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind," if nothing else, commands an unvarnished response – that was how Lennon initially reacted to Ono's art. He was impulsive. At an exhibit of her work, she put a green apple on a pedestal. Lennon, living up to his irreverent John Lennon self, plucked it off the stand and promptly took a bite.

A portrait of Yoko Ono is seen at the entrance to a retrospective exhibit her work at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago on Oct. 17.



"Add Colour (Refugee Boat)," an interactive art piece that began with a white rowboat in a white room, is in a retrospective exhibit of work by Yoko Ono at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago on Oct. 17. Visitors are invited to add their hopes and beliefs in blue and white hues to transform the piece.

Ono was not happy.

"Some exhibits are participatory and some are not," said Jamillah James, the senior curator at the MCA who adapted the show from its origin at London's Tate Modern. "That apple was one of Ono's first readymade works. I understand her being perturbed."

At the same time, so much of "Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind," so much of her practice requires the audience to become a part of its creation. Gallery after gallery, work by work, you receive instructions. Her remarkable "Instructions for Paintings," lined up along a gallery wall, don't offer traditional paintings but, yes, instructions for them, often reading like Zen koans: "Cut a painting up and let the pieces be lost in the wind…" A white full-sized rowboat in a white room – conceived in the early 1960s, but only realized in 2016 after Ono saw news accounts of migrants risking their lives to reach European shores – asks viewers to pick up a nearby blue marker and help paint the boat (and room) a solid ocean blue. "Bag Piece" offers you one of several large black sacks hanging on a wall: Climb inside, pose, create an abstract sculpture. (If you're hesitant or worried about being embarrassed, just know that John Lennon once climbed into a bag, enthusiastically.)

The very first work, "Painting to Be Stepped On," indeed, asks you to step on it. (As legend has it, Marcel Duchamp, the pioneering conceptual artist, visited one of Ono's early solo shows and walked right past this, much to her disappointment.) One piece asks you to stick your arm through a canvas and shake hands with anyone on the other side. Another offers you a hammer and a bucket of nails to pound into its blank canvas.

And yes, you can do this.

I repeat the point because, here and there, some works do not want your grubby hands on them. For instance, a ladder Ono once placed in a gallery and invited viewers to climb, then use a magnifying glass to read a word on the ceiling; the word was "YES." The ladder at the MCA is the same one that Lennon climbed when he visited Ono's work before they were married. He was smitten with the positivity and humor in it. (Do not climb this ladder.) The apple is there, too – or rather, a new apple. (Do not eat this apple.)

"Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind" is a history lesson wrapped inside of a study of a conceptual legacy, fleshed out with artifacts that place Ono in larger cultural and art-world contexts. Her audio narration of a short animated film. Footage of her classic "Cut Piece" – an art-school staple, in which Ono invited viewers to snip away bits of her clothing – is projected on a wall. There's a room (with beanbags) playing a loop of her more ambient recordings. There are photos and recordings of work with John Cage and Ornette Coleman and the influential cadre of experimental artists known as Fluxus. Near the end, Ono and Lennon's "WAR IS OVER" period is thoroughly documented.

But for the first half of "Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind," there is not a Beatle in sight.

"A lot of people bring a lot of preconceived notions," said James, "but it was imperative that we establish here that Yoko Ono was a fully formed artist before she even met Lennon."

By the 1960s, Ono had survived the fire bombing of Tokyo in 1945, and the starvation that followed, then she found a way to stand out as a feminist artist in an occupation dominated by men. Imagination itself became one of the themes of her career, but always paired with a preoccupation toward shattered objects and relationships and the hope for something like a repair. Ono would often say her first artwork was staring into the sky with her brother after Tokyo's destruction and imagining a brighter future. That's echoed poetically in an installation of World War II German military helmets filled with pieces of a puzzle of a blue sky. Sort of on the nose, sure. But viewers are encouraged to take home a piece of the puzzle, with the knowledge that somewhere out there, if everyone with a piece could come together, they might have a large colorful horizon.

There's also a room of tables covered with the shattered chunks of ceramic cups and dishes. Ono provides tape and string and asks you to repair them. It's not so different from the time, during a performance, she smashed a vase and asked the audience to bring home one shard each – but only if they agreed to meet back in a decade and try to repair the vase. Try is the key word there.

At the end of the exhibit, there's a work that stops you short: a tall sheet of glass splintered by a single bullet. Again, very on the nose. And yet, she made it almost 30 years after Lennon was assassinated. Ono is not delusional, only earnest. She understands that what's shattered is never entirely fixed. She asks for the impossible, but she also means it.

BOOKS

'I didn't like it'

John Grisham on how he fixed his novel 'The Widow'

By CHRIS HEWITT
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

It's been four decades since John Grisham was a small-town Mississippi lawyer, but that experience continues to provide material for his best-selling novels.

That was true of his first, "A Time to Kill," published in 1989, and it's true of his latest, "The Widow," which he'll discuss at the Minnesota Star Tribune and MPR News' Talking Volumes Oct. 23. In it, lawyer Simon Latch stumbles into what may be a golden opportunity or a career-ender: An elderly woman wants help with a will, claiming she has millions of dollars socked away. But is she telling the truth? And will her family learn of the secret wealth?

"I never had a wealthy client come in for a will and surprise me with his or her net worth," said Grisham, 70, by phone from his Virginia home (his drawl remains pure Mississippi). "But I was always curious what would happen if suddenly you had a client with no family, no connections in the world, no friends, and she needed your help. And she needed your advice. What would that do to a struggling small-town lawyer? Probably make him think about doing the wrong thing."

Latch thinks a lot about doing the wrong thing and, when the widow dies, is accused of hastening her death. He must prove his innocence in "The Widow" and try to figure out who, if anyone, contributed to his client's demise.

Grisham will talk about his "not-very-lucrative" legal career, his real-life work with the Innocence Project and his trouble nailing the ending of "The Widow" with Kerri Miller at St. Paul's Fitzgerald Theater on Oct. 23. (This interview has been edited for length and clarity.)

Q: So many of your books were inspired by your time as a lawyer. Did you keep a journal that you refer to when you start a new book?

A: More of a recall. When you practice law, like I did, and you see a lot of different cases, there's a lot of time in the courtroom with other lawyers and judges. There were two murder trials I handled, many types of cases. It stuck with me. And, as you might guess, I have a fertile, hyperactive imagination.

Q: That recall is how you hatched "A Time to Kill," right?

A: That was a direct result of something I saw in a courtroom one day when I was 30 years old. I never thought about being a writer, but I saw this very dramatic trial and it inspired this idea for a courtroom book. I became obsessed with it and finally decided to try and write it. It took me three years and got me started on this more pleasant career I have now.

Q: Another attorney, Scott Turow, published the bestseller "Presumed Innocent," a couple years before you. Do you ever think about the fact that you two kick-started a genre that so many others have hopped on?

A: Scott and I have laughed about it. We're pretty good friends. I'll tell you what happened. In 1987, Scott published "Presumed Innocent." Before Scott, there had been lawyers who were writers. I can't name them now, but no one was nearly as successful as Scott. The book was huge. Big movie. Made him a huge star. At that time, I was trying to finish my first novel, and I had been at it for three years. I never wanted to give up but I was often frustrated.

Q: His book helped you?

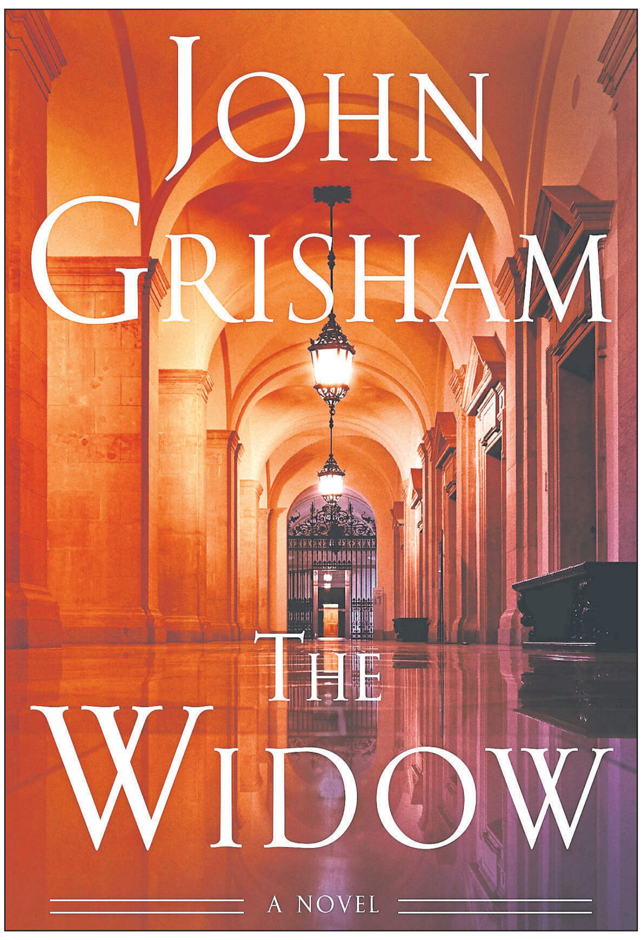
A: It really electrified the genre of the legal thriller, the courtroom drama. It inspired me to finish what became "A Time to Kill" and that led to the next book, "The Firm." The rest is history. Scott Turow was very much a crucial part of inspiring me to finish "A Time to Kill."

Q: Are you a fan of legal thrillers?

A: I've read all of Scott's books. David Baldacci is a buddy who also lives in Virginia. But lawyers are not very good writers, generally. They're very good storytellers but they usually fall flat as writers because, when it comes to fiction and telling a story, they get slowed down with the details. They tend to want to impress the reader with how much they know about the law, and you can't really do that in the context of a suspense novel. I've read a lot of legal thrillers that weren't thrilling.

Q: What was the trickiest part of getting "The Widow" right?

A: I had a big problem with the ending, which is unusual for me. I always know the ending before I start a book. I take a lot of time to outline the story and to really plot through the story before I start writing. I have these rules of writing proper fiction and that's one: Do not write the first scene until you know the last scene.



Doubleday Publishing / TNS

Q: But you're a rule-breaker?

A: It was a unique experience for me. When I got to the end, I didn't like it. My wife really didn't like it. My agent, who is also my editor for 35 years, didn't like it. So I said, "I'll keep writing." Now, the last quarter of the book is a whole new, major plot.

Q: You were able to identify where you'd gone wrong?

A: Oh, it was all screwed up. It was a bad idea all the way through, and I was able to fix it. I was desperate in January to finish it, to make it plausible.

Q: Because the book does such a balancing act with Simon, we're never sure if he might have crossed the line or not. It almost makes "The Widow" a whodunit, as well as a legal thriller.

A: I wanted Simon to be human and vulnerable and even a little dislikable because he got greedy. The goal was to write a whodunit, or a did-he-do-it. Actually, "Presumed Innocent" is a famous case of a did-he-do-it. He's charged with the crime and he goes on trial and the question is whether he did it and, if not, whodunit? I've never done that before in a book, and I love mysteries.

Q: Have you been to the Twin Cities?

A: For one of my best trips ever! 2019, the Final Four. Virginia, where we live and where we go to all the home games, made it to the Final Four and won the national title. We obviously enjoyed the tournament, and we thoroughly enjoyed the city.

BESTSELLERS

Here are the bestsellers for the week that ended Saturday, Oct. 18, compiled from data from independent and chain bookstores, book wholesalers and independent distributors nationwide, powered by Circana BookScan.

Hardcover fiction

1. Remain. Sparks/Shyamalan. Random House
2. Gone Before Goodbye. Witherspoon/Coben. Grand Central
3. Always Remember. Charlie Mackesy. Penguin Life
4. The Secret of Secrets. Dan Brown. Doubleday
5. The Intruder. Freida McFadden. Poisoned Pen
6. Alchemised. SenLinYu. Del Rey
7. Red Rising (deluxe ed.). Pierce Brown. Del Rey
8. Twice. Mitch Albom. Harper
9. Lights Out (collector's ed.). Navessa Allen. Slowburn
10. The Picasso Heist. Patterson/Roughan. Little, Brown

Hardcover nonfiction

1. Under Siege. Eric Trump. Threshold
2. 1929. Andrew Ross Sorkin. Viking
3. The Let Them Theory. Mel Robbins. Hay House
4. 107 Days. Kamala Harris. Simon & Schuster
5. How to Test Negative for Stupid. John Kennedy. Broadside
6. Separation of Church and Hate. John Fugelsang. Avid Reader
7. The Promise of Heaven. David Jeremiah. Thomas Nelson
8. Poems & Prayers. Matthew McConaughey. Crown
9. Last Rites. Ozzy Osbourne. Grand Central
10. Pagan Threat. Lucas Miles. Humanix

Trade paperback

1. Mate. Ali Hazelwood. Berkley
2. Merry Christmas, You Filthy Animal. Meghan Quinn. Bloom
3. The Surrogate Mother. Freida McFadden. Poisoned Pen
4. The Mad Wife. Meagan Church. Sourcebooks Landmark
5. The Gingerbread Bakery. Laurie Gilmore. HarperCollins
6. The Tenant. Freida McFadden. Poisoned Pen
7. Small Moves, Big Life. Andrea Leigh Rogers. BenBella
8. Caught Up. Navessa Allen. Slowburn
9. Sawyer. Jessica Peterson. Bloom
10. Counting Miracles. Nicholas Sparks. Dell

Reprinted from Publishers Weekly.

REVIEW

Prepare to care more about tubas than you ever thought possible

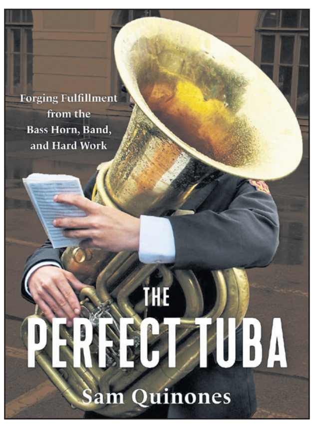
By CHRIS HEWITT
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

Add the tuba to the list of book subjects you probably thought you didn't care about but that is suddenly compelling as heck.

We've had entire books about salt, the digestive system and the color mauve and every one of them was oddly riveting. So, too, is "The Perfect Tuba." Author Sam Quinones, who was bummed out by the bleak reporting he had to do for his award-winning book about the opiate epidemic, "Dreamland," responded by pivoting to something kinder and more life-affirming. Enter the tuba.

Quinones' title refers to one of the first of many oddities we meet in the book: It's widely, perhaps universally, agreed that the two finest tubas in the world are in the possession of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The 90-year-old instruments were instantly proclaimed perfect in tone and power, and virtually every tuba manufacturer (more than you'd think!) has tried to unlock their secret, with varying degrees of lack-of-success.

"The Perfect Tuba" is packed with intriguing factoids about the tuba: In World War II, the Japanese used its booming sound to warn of attacks. Unsure what to do with unused tubas, people have turned them into birdbaths – and then back into tubas again. They're considered one of the humbler instruments, because they were born of circuses and brass bands rather than conservatories. Playing them requires so much effort that the life of a tubist is shorter than other instrumentalists; some orchestras have arranged their pension programs to reflect that. The most famous five tuba notes are in the "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" theme.



Bloomsbury / TNS

A veteran journalist, Quinones is a terrific reporter, who seems to have interviewed everyone who ever picked up a tuba or sousaphone. That meticulousness is the only way a book gets all of those totally tubular nuggets (another: There is only one person who makes a full-time living from playing solo tuba; he's Norwegian and the folks at Tuba Woodstock worship him as a god).

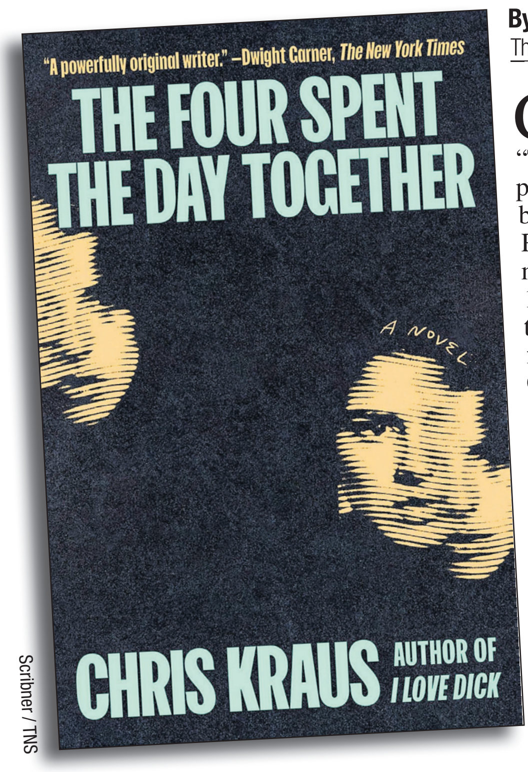
It's possibly Quinones is too thorough, in fact. There are a lot of people discussed in "The Perfect Tuba," particularly when he begins writing about heated marching band competitions in Texas or the college that churns out most of our country's high school band directors, and the book's non-chronological structure makes it hard to keep them straight. Also, unless you've read "Dreamland" (which I recommend), you may be confused about why Quinones keeps comparing the highs of playing in a band to the lows of addiction.

But would I want him to edit out any of that stuff? I would not. As he goes deeper into the motivations of tuba players and the joys of participating in a band or symphony – in which a group of individuals create collective beauty – it becomes clear that "The Perfect Tuba" is about a lot more than a brass instrument that takes up the entire back seat of most automobiles.

By the end of the book, the concept of the perfect tuba has shifted from the actual instrument to being a metaphor for anything that a person is passionate about and dedicated to. According to Quinones, your "tuba" may be a bed of dahlias or an expertly swam lap in a pool. And the fact that it can never be perfect – that you'll always be working toward that unattainable ideal – is part of what makes it perfect for you.

REVIEW

'I Love Dick' author moves to the Iron Range in sordid novel



Scribner / TNS

By CHRIS HEWITT
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

Can a cover doom a book?

I'd argue that's what happens with "The Four Spent the Day Together." It's 304 pages long but the event that's detailed on its back cover – three young people on the Iron Range murder an acquaintance while on a meth binge – does not happen until page 182. That incident also gives the book its title, and the effect is that the first 181 pages feel rushed and summarized, as if novelist Chris Kraus is racing to fill us in on some details before, more than halfway through her book, we finally get to the meat of it.

How come? The publisher seems to hope we'll think "The Four Spent the Day Together" is a murder-y thriller, which it isn't. (In the interests of full disclosure, the Minnesota Star Tribune makes several appearances in the book, which cites Stephen Montemayor's reporting on drug pipelines to Minnesota.)

Kraus caused a sensation with her 1997 novel "I Love Dick," which also became an attention-getting (if short-lived) Netflix series that starred Kathryn Hahn as Chris Kraus. Essentially, Kraus is the main character again in "The Four Spent the Day Together," although her name has been changed. The protagonist, called Catt, shares many biographical details with her creator, including the fact that she wrote a novel called "I Love Dick" that is being turned into a TV show but, let's hope, not including: a disastrous marriage to a backsliding alcoholic, difficult relationships with her parents (and a sister who all but disappears from this novel) and the murder that takes place near the summer cabin Catt and husband Paul often escape to on the Iron Range.

In many ways, "The Four Spent the Day Together" feels more like notes for a novel than a finished product. Decades race by in the space of a few pages, there are huge gaps in the narrative and most of the novel, especially the first half, is very tell-not-show, with Kraus describing major events in the lives of the characters without pausing to consider what they mean or even include dialogue. Anti-climactically, the final "notes" in the novel are a series of social-media posts that the book already has quoted from extensively.

Clearly, Kraus is interested in class differences in America's supposedly classless society and she writes about them with insight, as when a young woman tries to help Catt understand adolescent life on the Range: "You see the economic gaps among kids, how much their parents make, by who they hang out with. All the lower-income kids band together. The upper-income kids have lots of different groups, but the lower-income kids just have one group."

Growing up on the East Coast, Catt is painfully aware of the differences between her middle-class family and the wealthier, more respected families that literally live across the street, in a tonier development. Catt's on the other side of the class divide as an adult, after "I Love Dick" unexpectedly takes off and she and Paul can afford to try to get away from it all on the Iron Range, where it's evident that many of their neighbors are struggling. Paul, in fact, seems determined to use booze and drugs to "escape" their comfortable life, which makes him feel profoundly uncomfortable.

It's a sordid story, the pain and emptiness of which are underscored by Kraus' unadorned prose. When things start coming together, it's compelling stuff. But there's way too much aimless wandering on the way there.

Brendon Thorne / Getty Images / TNS

Nick Offerman speaks during a press conference at Pier One Sydney Harbour on June 12 in Sydney, Australia.

Nick Offerman's life *is a circus*

It's also a rousing manifesto against AI

By NINA METZ
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

CHICAGO — "When I daydream," Nick Offerman says, "it's of having quiet moments with a cup of tea, sitting out by the birdfeeder and coming to know my neighborhood birds by name as they come to eat out of my hand."

The fantasy, however, has yet to become a reality. "I'm moving too fast to do that right now."

Offerman's newest book is out this week, called "Little Woodchucks: Offerman Woodshop's Guide to Tools and Tomfoolery," which is an introduction to woodworking for kids. He co-stars in the upcoming Netflix miniseries "Death By Lightning" about the 1881 assassination of U.S. president James Garfield, playing his vice president-turned-successor Chester Arthur. He also has another series in the works, this one for Apple called "Margo's Got Money Problems," due out next year. Offerman was even multitasking when we caught up by phone, juggling our conversation while he was behind the wheel, driving from Los Angeles to Orange County to pick up his Airstream for an upcoming trip with his wife, Megan Mullally.

"I'm always running a circus with too many plates spinning in it," he says. One of those plates resulted in an Emmy win last year for his guest role in HBO's "The Last of Us," but it is also why any plans of becoming "a little more Whitman-esque or Thoreau-vian" will have to wait.

"I enjoy being productive way too much. For me, happiness in life is derived from being in service to others, which starts with Megan, expands to my family and friends, and then my job, whether it's acting, writing a book, touring as a humorist or working at my woodshop – these are things that I would do for fun, so that's kind of become my main vice. Somebody will call up and say, 'Hey, you wanna come tour England and enjoy a pint of Guinness and a sausage roll while you make people laugh with your guitar?' That doesn't sound like the drudgery of the workplace, that sounds like a vacation that I would pay handsomely to take.

"Perhaps one day, as my knee starts to complain more, I'll have time to get to know the avian life around my house a little bit better. But for now, I'm just happy to wave to them on my way to my next gig. I'm living my dream more powerfully than anybody I've ever met."

Q: Prior to "Death By Lightning," how much did you know about James Garfield, his assassin Charles Guiteau (played by Michael Shannon and Matthew Macfadyen respectively) and the character you play, Chester Arthur?

A: Well, I knew pretty much all of the information that could be gleaned from Stephen Sondheim's musical "Assassins," a production for which I built a set in Urbana, Illinois, in 1991 or so, during my college years. So I actually knew more about Charlie Guiteau than Garfield. But the thrill of the miniseries is that it's one of those true stories you can't believe isn't common knowledge.

I'm such a huge fan of Candice Millard, who wrote the book "Destiny of the Republic," which is what Mike Makowsky adapted into the miniseries. I was fascinated to learn that Chester Arthur was a former lawyer and good guy who was kind of corrupted – as so many are – by the money around politics. By the time our story begins, he's become a strong-arming goon in service of Roscoe Conkling (a senator from New York played by Shea Whigham), which gives him a wonderful arc in the show. He has a long way to go (chuckles) to win back the approval of his constituency.

Q: Both you and Michael Shannon spent your formative years doing theater in Chicago. Did your time here overlap? Did you know each other?

A: We sure did. I met Mike – I think I was 23 and he was 19 – and we were exact contemporaries, in fact. We got started at the same time in the early '90s and we did a play together at his company, A Red Orchid Theatre. It was by Arthur Kopit called "The Questioning of Nick" (about two detectives and a student who stands accused). It's this 20-minute play that's a three-hander, so it was me, Mike and Guy Van Swearingen and it was directed by Rich Cotovsky and it was the one of the greatest things that I ever got to do.

It's this simple little play and we would perform it, then the lights would go down and we would switch parts and we'd do it again, and then the lights would go down and we'd do it a third time. So the audience saw each of us play all three parts in a neat little hour. It was so fascinating, it had a "Rashomon" sensibility where everyone immediately got the gimmick and were just rapt at these three young actors taking their swing at their interpretation of these roles. There's a scene where Mike was one of the detectives and I was the errant high schooler in the play, and he would take my head and hold it between his two dinner plate hands and speak softly and menacingly to me. I've never had a more comfortable coddling on stage, but at the same time it was terrifying – it was like a shark gently nuzzling my head in its teeth before delivering the final honors.

So I've long been a huge fan of Mike and we've been friends for decades.

Q: What was it like working together again all this time later?

A: There is a comfort level. And thanks to our director Matt Ross and Mike Makowsky, who wrote and executive produced it, they put together this team where all of us are theater people. So it felt like we all went to theater school together on some level.

There's a scene where Betty Gilpin (as Garfield's wife Lucretia) has to slap me across the face and, there was no question, my stage combat chops stepped in and I said, "If it's OK with everybody, I'll take care of it." And we did 12 or 15 – and Betty was nothing short of gleeful to be asked to strike me full across the face.

Q: You really took a slap? I know it's possible to shoot from an angle where two people aren't making contact but it looks like they are.

A: You absolutely can do that, and I always insist, as a fight choreographer, that there's no need to take a punch. It's just dumb. It's juvenile machismo if you're like, "No, no, no, I want you to really punch me!" But an open-handed slap, whenever possible – if everybody is competent – is so impactful to actually do it. And if you do it right, you can do it without causing any injury. And there's nothing Betty does that isn't right, so she was equal and eager to the task. And I'm not kidding, she slapped the hell out of my face 12 times, and 15 minutes later it wasn't even red. If you do it right, it's really effective.

Q: Perhaps there was a slight cushion with the mutton chops that Arthur sports. I always assume everything is fake, so maybe those were applied to you each morning, but you seem like someone who would want to grow your own!

A: Those are fully my own facial hair. The only time I would use fake facial hair is if I need a big beard and I don't have time to grow it. But 95 percent of the whiskers I have in my career are my own. Ariana Grande can sing like an angel; for me, it's growing facial hair.

Q: Your new book is focused on woodworking projects for young people. How did that come about?

A: It's at the heart of everything I do at my woodshop, which encompasses so much of my life. Part of what fueled my skills as a fine woodworker was my work building scenery for Chicago theater. And my co-author Lee Buchanan, the same is true for her. We were taught by our parents to use tools and make things as kids, and that has made our lives so rewarding. And we've never stopped making things.

So the book is designed to make things with kids, and for kids. But it's actually a thinly veiled screed to, and for, everybody. There are many, many parents who never learned how to make things with their hands or tools. So it's truly speaking to the kid in all of us. I think that the more our society falls into a fealty to corporate systems and technology – where we choose all of the items in our lives by pushing a button on our phone – I think that's terrifying. I bristle against that, and the way that I do this is by knowing how to make things for myself. Or by buying them from people who make things.

This book is a lot of fun. It's really funny and it's a great, gentle, beginner level woodworking course. But moms and dads, grandparents, neighborhood friends, everybody will get the same childish delight out of gluing together three pieces of wood to make a set of toast tongs, and suddenly you feel the super power of being able to pull your toast out of the toaster with your own woodworking skills.

Q: In the preface, you only use the words "artificial intelligence" once, but the introduction feels like such a rousing manifesto against AI.

A: I apparently fall into the category of "curmudgeon" because I appreciate, with the rest of the world, advances in technology and all of the good things that have been brought to our planet by the information age. But we're all also painfully aware of all the nefarious and cancerous forces at play delivered by those same systems. And now this complicity, this tacit agreement on the part of society to allow AI and robots to do as much work as possible for us, seems so narrow-minded and short-sighted.

I've crunched these numbers: If you make some money and sit around and get drunk and fat, it is very enjoyable – sometimes for up to a day-and-a-half. And then after that (laughs) you realize, oh, this is no way to live. It'll go downhill very quickly because this goes against every moral rule that I've been brought up with.

And so, instead of falling into the trap of getting online and being the one billionth person to give my hot take on the state of affairs, I recognize the futility of that. And I recognize the delight that the billionaires and corporations take in all of us being distracted with online fist-shaking. My solution, instead, is to write a book that encourages positivity, that encourages empathy, and in this case, it's encouraging people to keep the reins of your life in your own hands and don't allow corporations to decide what happens with all of our natural resources. That's what it comes down to: By lazily handing over this agency to AI or whoever is running the algorithm, then you're saying "I don't care what you're doing with the oil, or the ocean or the fish or the soil. Or the people." I think it's incumbent upon us as citizens of this nation and this planet to always give a (expletive) about what is happening to all of those resources.

I'm not a literally religious person, but that's where my spirituality lies. I think we're responsible to one another – and to the creation – to care for it, if for no other reason than to be a good ancestor to the generations coming after this.

Q: One of the things you write in the preface is that "you'll begin to learn how to generally solve problems" and "you'll become a better thinker in every aspect of your life." Problem-solving jumped out as a really smart thing to focus on because it's a skill that we're being encouraged to rely on less and less.

A: Our society is built on the progression and evolution of thought. And part of what manifests those thoughts and grand ideas is our ability to truck in grammar and communication and writing and reading and problem-solving. And when you let the computer do all of your thinking for you, that terrifies me. Age and natural entropy on their own are doing all the damage that I need.

So what can I do about this? One little thing is that I can write this book and encourage people to think for themselves – and know how the world is put together – so that wherever we can, we can make our own goods and support other members of the ecosystem who care about a community, and don't just job-out our decision-making and our retail purchases to some nameless, faceless corporation.

Q: There are lots of photos of you horsing around with children in the book. Are they models, or are they children you know?

A: (Laughs) I'm not so Hollywood that I would need to acquire models.

Two of them are the sons of Lee, my co-author, and they could probably outwork me by now. They're Berkeley kids, which means they could probably build a house faster than I could. And the rest of them are kids that I know and love and that are part of my community.

AUTOMOTIVE

AUTO REVIEWS

Taking sci-fi Tesla Cybertruck to work on farm

By HENRY PAYNE
The Detroit News (TNS)

Photos by Henry Payne / The Detroit News / TNS

LEFT: The 2025 Tesla Cybertruck All-Wheel Drive 6-foot bed is good for chores at the Stratford Historic Preserve. **RIGHT:** The spartan interior.

If I had pulled up to the Lee family home in 1776 in a Tesla Cybertruck, they would have thought I was a time traveler from the future.

Which is not much different than the reaction I received when I pulled up in 2025.

I took a Cybertruck on a weekend trip with Mrs. Payne this fall to help prepare Stratford Hall, the historic home of signers Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee, for next year's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Our Turo rental was mobbed by Stratford volunteers, staffers and board members as if I had driven onto campus in a Tron Light Cycle.

If the Ford F-150 is America's best-selling pickup, then Cybertruck is its most famous. Six years after its wild Silicon Valley introduction, the electric pickup still creates a buzz.

From its radical shape to its face-flattening speed to its self-driving capabilities, Cybertruck is a celebrity that looks like it rolled off a sci-fi movie set. Bladerunner, Tron, Mad Max – take your pick. When I wasn't giving thrill rides to just about everyone on the 1,800-acre Stratford farm, the truck was proving itself a useful Swiss army knife hauling cargo.

It is still a rarity – particularly in places like rural Virginia, where full-size work trucks are everywhere – with its rich, $82K starting price and propensity to attract domestic terrorists who want to blow it up. I was encouraged by the truck's enthusiastic reception, a promising sign the furries have moved on to other targets. Still, the truck's high price and sluggish sales are surely a disappointment to Tesla.

With Cybertruck, CEO Elon Musk was determined to jump-start the EV revolution in the market's highest-volume segment. But the high price of batteries – and their inherent towing limitations – has kept Cybertruck (and other EV pickups) from competing in mass-volume, $40K truck business fleets.

Cybertruck competes against premium, country-club trucks like the Ford F-150 Raptor, Ram 1500 RHO, Chevy Silverado High Country, GMC Hummer EV and Ford Lightning Platinum EV.

In truth Cybertruck is a class of one, the most radical vehicle of the 21st century.

Begin with its polarizing design. Everyone has an opinion. The truck's militaristic vibe skews male, but female reactions were all over the map.

Very futuristic.

It's ugly.

Can you take a picture of me with the Tesla so I can share with my kids?

Where's the machine gun turret?

I've driven Tesla's distinctive model lineup extensively, and Cybertruck's design is the most extreme. Yet, once inside, I was reminded how similar its operation is to its siblings. iPhone simple aesthetics. Horizontal lines. Mono-screen housing most controls: mirror/steering position, climate controls, even shifting.

To a non-Tesla user, it's an alien landscape.

Exiting Metro D.C.'s Reagan National Airport, I barked my destination to the truck – "Navigate to Tesla Supercharger in King George, Virginia" – then didn't touch the wheel for the next 48 miles. As I tuned Sirius XM stations, Cybertruck drove itself through D.C. traffic, the I-495 Beltway and Maryland routes 210 and 301 before exiting to fill up on electrons for the weekend ahead.

The FSD (Full Self Driving) system has made steady strides since its 2020 introduction. The truck slowed down to avoid a rogue trash can in the road and executed round-abouts with aplomb. On other occasions it maneuvered uncomfortably close to other vehicles, a reminder FSD still needs a chaperone.

Hands-free driving and stainless-steel skin just scratch the surface of its ambitions. Cybertruck's also the first vehicle to market with variable electronic steering. Together with all-wheel steer, it makes the 19-foot-long beast feel smaller than it is.

Once Cybertruck had delivered me to the Supercharger in a Sheetz lot, I needed minimal steering input to maneuver it in place next to the charging stalls. The truck ID'd an open space, then backed itself in. Whoa. Not so "whoa" are Tesla charging cables designed for compact Model 3 and Model Ys – not Cybertruck ocean liners. The cord just reached the left-rear-fender-mounted NACS port.

Twenty-five minutes later, I exited onto rural-lanes roads with 80 percent battery capacity. Enough self-driving. Time to wring the truck's neck over the twisted roads of Virginia's Northern Neck.

ZOT!

Cybertruck blew by a line of traffic on two-lane Route 3 in the blink of an eye. Car and Driver recorded the 6,634-pound Cybertruck hitting 60 mph in just 3.9 seconds (the same as a 3,241-pound Porsche Cayman GTS, for goodness sake). On a narrow secondary road, it felt like warp speed.

That precise variable steering and adaptive shocks helped keep Cyberrocket grounded. But with all-terrain tires and air suspension, the Tesla's natural habitat is off-road. Perfect for Stratford farm's endless fields (or Detroit's pocked streets).

I stopped at a Marathon service station outside Stratford and loaded the pickup's cooler with ice. Cooler?

Tesla is synonymous with frunks (front trunk) and Cybertruck is no exception. But Tesla also sports a substantial, sub-bed locker space.

I emptied four bags of ice and only filled it halfway. Throw in a case of bottled water and I was a rolling fridge for thirsty Stratford staff.

Cybertruck's six-foot bed is also unorthodox with its sloped panels. They make it difficult to load from the sides, but twin 110-volt plugs and a 240-volt plug are a tailgate party's friend. The automatic tonneau cover is a welcome innovation for inclement fall weather. As I hauled beverage cases and event signage, protecting my cargo from a sudden change in weather was as simple as pressing the screen's tonneau cover button.

I crisscrossed the farm's dirt roads and grassy fields. Giant Pirelli Scorpion all-terrains are complemented by an air suspension so I could hike Cybertruck's steel skirts to 16 inches off the ground. Shred a tire and it will cost (cough) $529 to replace. On the other hand, Stratford's landscape chief Matt Peterschmidt approved of the simple drop-gate compared to competitor's multi-action contraptions.

"Tailgates are the first thing to fail on a pickup," he smiled.

In the middle of a field, I asked the truck to self-drive back to the main house and, remarkably, it found the fence opening and got to the main road.

At weekend's end, I headed back to D.C., the truck's 320-mile range proving accurate (I got 98 percent of predicted range) despite my heavy left foot.

Turo required the Tesla be returned with 80 percent battery range, which exposed the EV's weakness compared to gas-powered peers: efficiency. Tesla's Supercharger network was accessible – even in rural Virginia – but charging back to 88 percent (at the closest charger to the airport) from 32 percent added 40 minutes to my 90-minute journey. Cost? At 44 cents-per-kWh, the same as $2.75-a-gallon gas in an 18-mpg F-150 Raptor.

While it may look like it came from Mars, Cybertruck proved right at home at the historic preserve. Heck, in 1776 – after the shock wore off – the Lees probably would have adopted it for use in the American Revolution. After all, its stainless-steel skin is bulletproof.

Next week: 2026 Nissan Sentra

Henry Payne is auto critic for The Detroit News.

2025 Tesla Cybertruck

★★★★

Vehicle type: All-wheel-drive, five-passenger pickup

Price: Base $82,235, including $1,995 destination charge ($90,235 with FSD as tested)

Powerplant: 123 kWh lithium-ion battery pack mated to dual electric motors

Power: 593 horsepower, 525 pound-feet of torque

Transmission: Single-speed automatic

Performance: 0-60 mph, 3.9 seconds (Car and Driver); towing, 11,000 pounds

Weight: 6,634 pounds

Range: 320 miles on full charge

Report card

Highs: King of the Road; FSD OMG

Lows: Polarizing styling; $$$$

2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid will soothe your eco-friendly soul

By LARRY PRINTZ
Tribune News Service (TNS)

The 2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid is proof that the Koreans have done what the Japanese did 30 years ago: looked at the established order, taken notes, and then made better cars at lower prices with more style, more cleverness, and more empathy for the human beings who actually drive them. The 2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid isn't just an appliance; it's a conscious, environmentally friendly guilt-neutralizer that is helping save the world. You can park at Whole Foods without getting too much stink-eye from the anti-capitalist crowd. They'll just see it and nod in approval, and you'll nod back as if you've cured climate change with a cup of kombucha.

Inside, Kia's done what all car manufacturers are doing, festooning the instrument panel with a pair of 12.3-inch screens stretched across the dash like a Best Buy showroom. One is the instrument cluster, the other the infotainment setup. OK, that's a lot of screen. Thankfully, Kia sets the climate controls apart, lower on the instrument panel, making it easy and quick to use. New options include a head-up display, and a Digital Key, which allows you to use your smartphone wallet as a vehicle key. There's also a new Terrain mode on all-wheel-drive models to handle snow, mud and sand.

Elsewhere, every surface is soft-touch, vegan-friendly and probably sterilized with essential oils. Thoughtfully, there are purse hooks on the back of the seatbacks as well as ridges that can hold a smartphone or iPad on the back of the headrests. The door panels are beautifully designed as are many of the cabin's surfaces. The comfortable seats have prominent side bolsters and there's good headroom. Rear seat sits comfortably high, but headroom is tight for taller passengers. But you'll find the ride is extremely firm, as there's not enough bump absorption, resulting in a very jiggly ride over rough pavement.

The styling is pure modern Kia: all sharp edges and confident stances, like a pair of sunglasses that cost too much but feel worth it. There's a touch of swagger here. Clearly, Kia knows what it's doing. It's a cabin that feels like it was designed by people who actually drive.

The powertrain isn't going to break any records, but it's not trying to. It's a 1.6-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine mated to a 44-kW electric motor. If that sounds somewhat timid, that's because it is. Total output is 232 horsepower routed through a six-speed automatic transmission. That's plenty for normal, non-track-day, non-road warrior wannabes. Acceleration is adequate, but that reserve of power needed for a quick burst of power is lacking. It will get you to 60 mph in less than 8 seconds, which is fast enough to escape your own bad decisions and just peppy enough to make you feel like you're doing something vaguely sporty. Should you want to tow something, it will yank 2,000 pounds. Lower-level trims come with front-wheel drive, while the EX and SX-Prestige have all-wheel drive system with center locking.

Hit the road and the Sportage is smooth, linear and blessedly quiet. There's a sense of refinement, a polished composure that makes you wonder why anyone still buys a purely gas-powered small SUV. It comports itself with an almost eerie silence. No drama. No fuss. Just competence executed beautifully. It performs like a well-behaved intern: competent, unobtrusive, and absolutely terrified of offending anyone.

Cornering brings out modest body lean, braking is well-mannered, and the steering wheel feels like it was borrowed from a very expensive video game controller. And the fuel economy? It's rated as much as 42 mpg in combined city/highway driving, but the test drive yielded 36 mpg.

Sure, the 2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid is not perfect. Nothing with an engine, a VIN, and a cupholder will ever be perfect. But this thing comes closer than it has any right to. You get into it expecting an appliance and discover something that's been crafted with real intent, like finding out your accountant plays jazz saxophone after hours.

In a world full of forgettable crossovers, the 2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid is memorable for all the right reasons. It's handsome, efficient, and deeply satisfying in the way that only a well-thought-out machine can be. It reminds us that good design, honest engineering, and a touch of ambition still matter.

Larry Printz is an automotive journalist based in South Florida.

Kia / TNS

2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid

Base price: $31,785

Powertrain: 1.6-liter turbocharged four-cylinder and 44-kW electric motor

Horsepower/Torque: 232/271 pound-feet

EPA rating (combined city/highway): 42 mpg

Fuel required: 87 Octane

Length/Width/Height: 184/73/66 inches

Ground clearance: 8.3 inches

Payload: 1,098 pounds

Cargo capacity: 34.5-65 cubic feet

Towing capacity: 2,000 pounds

TECHNOLOGY

GADGETS

LEFT: Satechi FindAll Glasses Case.
MIDDLE: Satechi FindAll Keychain.
RIGHT: Satechi FindAll Card.
Satechi / TNS

Never lose your essentials again

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service (TNS)

If there is someone on this planet who doesn't misplace their smartphone, keys, glasses or other essentials at one time or another, good for you. For the rest of us, Satechi's new Find All collection of trackable travel essentials, which utilizes Apple's Find My technology, is a must-have.

First, if you're not familiar with Apple's Find My features and you have an iPhone or other Apple products, you already have a head start. Find My is an Apple app that makes it easy to keep track of your Apple devices – even if they're offline. Additionally, you can locate items using Apple AirTags or Find My technology, which is built into the new Satechi accessories.

Once you register them on the app, it takes just seconds to pinpoint their whereabouts from a computer, iPad or iPhone. The Find My app shows you their location, allowing you to play an alert to hear where they are, which is helpful if they are within reach but out of sight. To keep them working, they have to be wirelessly charged on a charging pad.

Among my favorites is the **Satechi FindAll Keychain** ($29.99), which features a standard key ring to store all your household and vehicle keys and fobs. It's attached to a pocket-sized holder with a premium vegan leather exterior (1.34 x 1.34 x 0.35 inches). It's designed to hold keys, but can also be attached to backpacks or luggage for added tracking convenience. It has to be charged once a year.

Keeping glasses protected in a case is one thing, but often finding the case is another. With the Vegan-Leather **Find All Glasses Case** ($49.99), you'll find them in seconds using the Find My app or by sounding the loud, audible chime. It has up to 8 months of battery life before a wireless charge is needed. It's listed as compatible with most glasses and sunglasses.

Finding luggage is often an adventure, so the **Satechi FindAll Luggage Tag** ($44.99) will surely make it easier. It features an adjustable strap for attachment and includes a name card slot with a privacy flap. It also has a vegan leather finish and has up to 8 months of battery life.

The **Find All Card** ($34.99) is a credit card-sized Find My tracker crafted from aluminum and tempered glass. Measuring just 3.35 by 2.13 by 0.09 inches, it is designed to fit in most wallets or purses. You only need to charge it once every 16 months, and it features an IP67 waterproof rating.

All these join the Satechi FindAll lineup, which already featured the **FindAll Passport Cover** ($59.99). It has room for your passport, other documents and credit cards. It needs to be charged every 5 months and is pocket-sized (5.6 by 4.2 by 0.7 inches).

https://satechi.net

DecorTech End Table.
DecorTech / TNS

The multi-functional **DecorTech End Table** looks and functions like an everyday end table, providing a place to set down a drink, store TV remotes and accommodate a few other accessories. But what makes it more than just a piece of furniture is what's built inside for modern living.

What makes all this happen is that the stylish end table has a top-sided built-in 10-watt wireless charging pad for compatible mobile devices. Place your smartphone on the center charging station, and it will charge up.

The part that really caught my attention is the gray cloth speaker grill on the perimeter of the rounded table. Inside is a 6.5-inch subwoofer and a 2-inch full-range speaker, producing powerful, crystal-clear 360-degree sound. Now you can connect your media source via Bluetooth V5.0 to play through the end table.

The table itself measures 15.75 inches in diameter and 23.62 inches in height, and features a black glass tabletop. Four black wooden legs screw into the bottom without the need for any tools. And that's the entire setup. An AC power cord, which plugs into any standard household outlet, is included. It plugs into the side, where there is also a 3.5mm AUX audio input for a direct wired connection for your music.

A USB-A port is built into the side for wired charging. Touch controls for power, pairing, volume and music selections are located at the top, which also control the built-in FM scan radio for easy listening.

https://iliveelectronics.com/furniture/decortech-round-speaker-table-with-wireless-charging-dtacsq602lg.html
$115.38 at Walmart

Contact Gregg Ellman at greggellman@mac.com. Follow him on Twitter @greggellman.

Karen Palmer / DecorTech / TNS
DecorTech End Table.

Set up account recovery information before you need it

By JIM ROSSMAN
Tribune News Service (TNS)

This week a reader asks about how to recover an email account that disappeared off their phone. "My wife had her email account disappear (like into cyberspace). We've tried to restore via reboot and numerous calls to AT&T and to Apple. Neither were helpful. Any thoughts on what could be done?"

AT&T has a webpage to help users get back into their accounts if they're having trouble logging in. You can visit more.att.com/myemailinfo.

What you do next depends on how you have the account set up.

You can update your password online if AT&T can validate your identity. This validation is done by providing account recovery information, which needs to be added to your account when you are logged in. In other words, you need to set up recovery information on your account before you need it.

This advice is for all types of online accounts. You will find a profile link on all your online accounts. This link will show you your account information, including login details.

On the AT&T portal, once you've logged in, you'll see a small circle with your initial in it on the upper right. Click the circle and you'll see a button to "Manage your account."

This page has a section for sign-in information, which lets the user enter a phone number and a recovery email address, which should be a different email address entirely. You can also fill out some security questions.

These recovery items are used if you need to validate your identity to reset your password.

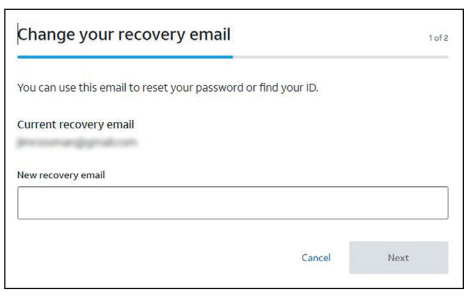
If you need to reset your password, a code or password reset link will be sent to the recovery email or texted to the recovery phone number.

If you don't have alternate recovery methods listed in your profile, you'll have to jump through some pretty serious hoops to get your password reset.

AT&T provides an online form you need to fill out to prove your identity against AT&T internal records to validate your account. If they like the answers you provide on the recovery form, an AT&T customer service agent will contact you, which should happen in 72 hours.

This is certainly less convenient, so do yourself a favor and check the recovery information on your important online accounts before you need it.

Jim Rossman is a tech columnist for Tribune News Service. He may be reached at jrossmantechadviser@gmail.com.



Jim Rossman / TNS
The AT&T recovery email interface.

OpenAI slipped shopping into 800 million ChatGPT users' chats

Here's why that matters

THE CONVERSATION

By YUANYUAN (GINA) CUI and PATRICK VAN ESCH
Coastal Carolina University
(The Conversation)

Your phone buzzes at 6 a.m. It's ChatGPT: "I see you're traveling to New York this week. Based on your preferences, I've found three restaurants near your hotel. Would you like me to make a reservation?"

You didn't ask for this. The AI simply knew your plans from scanning your calendar and email and decided to help. Later, you mention to the chatbot needing flowers for your wife's birthday. Within seconds, beautiful arrangements appear in the chat. You tap one: "Buy now." Done. The flowers are ordered.

This isn't science fiction. On Sept. 29, OpenAI and payment processor Stripe launched the Agentic Commerce Protocol. This technology lets you buy things instantly from Etsy within ChatGPT conversations. ChatGPT users are scheduled to gain access to over 1 million other Shopify merchants, from major household brand names to small shops as well.

As marketing researchers who study how AI affects consumer behavior, we believe we're seeing the beginning of the biggest shift in how people shop since smartphones arrived. Most people have no idea it's happening.

From searching to being served

For three decades, the internet has worked the same way: You want something, you Google it, you compare options, you decide, you buy. You're in control.

That era is ending.

AI shopping assistants are evolving through three phases. First came "on-demand AI." You ask ChatGPT a question, it answers. That's where most people are today.

Now we're entering "ambient AI," where AI suggests things before you ask. ChatGPT monitors your calendar, reads your emails and offers recommendations without being asked.

Soon comes "autopilot AI," where AI makes purchases for you with minimal input from you. "Order flowers for my anniversary next week." ChatGPT checks your calendar, remembers preferences, processes payment and confirms delivery.

Each phase adds convenience but gives you less control.

The manipulation problem

AI's responses create what researchers call an "advice illusion." When ChatGPT suggests three hotels, you don't see them as ads. They feel like recommendations from a knowledgeable friend. But you don't know whether those hotels paid for placement or whether better options exist that ChatGPT didn't show you.

Traditional advertising is something most people have learned to recognize and dismiss. But AI recommendations feel objective even when they're not. With one-tap purchasing, the entire process happens so smoothly that you might not pause to compare options.

OpenAI isn't alone in this race. In the same month, Google announced its competing protocol, AP2. Microsoft, Amazon and Meta are building similar systems. Whoever wins will be in position to control how billions of people buy things, potentially capturing a percentage of trillions of dollars in annual transactions.

What we're giving up

This convenience comes with costs most people haven't thought about.

Privacy: For AI to suggest restaurants, it needs to read your calendar and emails. For it to buy flowers, it needs your purchase history. People will be trading total surveillance for convenience.

Choice: Right now, you see multiple options when you search. With AI as the middleman, you might see only three options ChatGPT chooses. Entire businesses could become invisible if AI chooses to ignore them.

Power of comparing: When ChatGPT suggests products with one-tap checkout, the friction that made you pause and compare disappears.

It's happening faster than you think

ChatGPT reached 800 million weekly users by September 2025, growing four times faster than social media platforms did. Major retailers began using OpenAI's Agentic Commerce Protocol within days of its launch.

History shows people consistently underestimate how quickly they adapt to convenient technologies. Not long ago most people wouldn't think of getting in a stranger's car. Uber now has 150 million users.

Convenience always wins. The question isn't whether AI shopping will become mainstream. It's whether people will keep any real control over what they buy and why.

What you can do

The open internet gave people a world of information and choice at their fingertips. The AI revolution could take that away. Not by forcing people, but by making it so easy to let the algorithm decide that they forget what it's like to truly choose for themselves. Buying things is becoming as thoughtless as sending a text.

In addition, a single company could become the gatekeeper for all digital shopping, with the potential for monopolization beyond even Amazon's current dominance in e-commerce. We believe that it's important to at least have a vigorous public conversation about whether this is the future people actually want.

Here are some steps you can take to resist the lure of convenience:

- **Question AI suggestions.** When ChatGPT suggests products, recognize you're seeing hand-picked choices, not all your options. Before one-tap purchases, pause and ask: Would I buy this if I had to visit five websites and compare prices?
- **Review your privacy settings carefully.** Understand what you're trading for convenience.
- **Talk about this with friends and family.** The shift to AI shopping is happening without public awareness. The time to have conversations about acceptable limits is now, before one-tap purchasing becomes so normal that questioning it seems strange.

The invisible price tag

AI will learn what you want, maybe even before you want it. Every time you tap "Buy now" you're training it – teaching it your patterns, your weaknesses, what time of day you impulse buy.

Our warning isn't about rejecting technology. It's about recognizing the trade-offs. Every convenience has a cost. Every tap is data. The companies building these systems are betting you won't notice, and in most cases they're probably right.

Yuanyuan (Gina) Cui and Patrick van Esch are associate professor of marketing at Coastal Carolina University.

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HOME & GARDEN

DESIGN RECIPES

Kitchen features to avoid

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service (TNS)

Scott Gabriel Morris / TNS

TOP: High gloss cabinetry is paired with dark cabinetry in this open kitchen. **ABOVE:** Open shelving is used in a modern, urban kitchen.

When it comes to home selling, kitchens are a key selling feature. While renovations and basic upgrades can help increase buyer appeal, the wrong design choices may actually hurt resale value.

Here are 10 trends that may look "in" today but are likely to feel tired tomorrow, along with some tips on what you can do instead to keep your kitchen space timeless and on trend.

1. DON'T: Bold Colored Cabinetry

DO: Stick with timeless neutrals like white, black, or warm wood tones that appeal to a broader range of buyers.

2. DON'T: Open Shelving Everywhere

Open shelves can look stylish in photos, but they collect dust and clutter.

DO: Incorporate them sparingly, and balance with closed cabinetry for a clean, functional look.

3. DON'T: Ultra-Glossy Finishes

High-shine cabinets or countertops can scream "trend" and show fingerprints instantly.

DO: Opt for matte or satin finishes that feel more sophisticated and stand the test of time.

4. DON'T: Mixed Metals Gone Wild

Too many competing metallic finishes – brass, copper, chrome – can look chaotic.

DO: Choose one dominant metal and, if mixing, keep the palette subtle and consistent.

5. DON'T: Industrial Overload

Exposed pipes, concrete counters and warehouse vibes are falling out of favor.

DO: Blend subtle industrial touches (like lighting) with warm, natural materials for balance.

6. DON'T: Overly Themed Kitchens

All farmhouse shiplap or all ultra-modern glossy white can feel like a time capsule.

DO: Create a transitional look that mixes classic elements with modern function.

7. DON'T: Tiny Mosaic Backsplashes

Those small glass tile mosaics that once felt chic now appear dated.

DO: Choose larger-scale tiles or natural stone for a look that's fresh yet timeless.

8. DON'T: Too Much Open Concept

A fully exposed kitchen connected to every living space can reduce resale appeal as buyers crave defined zones.

DO: Keep the kitchen open but use architectural details like islands or partial walls to provide separation.

9. DON'T: Over-Designed Islands

Two-toned paint, ornate corbels and ultra-trendy waterfall edges may not age well.

DO: Keep the island simple, functional and in proportion to the space.

10. DON'T: Oversized Appliances That Dominate

Massive ranges or double refrigerators can overwhelm smaller kitchens and alienate buyers.

DO: Select appropriately scaled, energy-efficient appliances that feel high-end but not overpowering.

Cathy Hobbs is the owner of Cathy Hobbs Design Recipes, a home staging company based in New York City (www.cathyhobbs.com). She is also the owner of Highland Passive House, a Home Staging + Design Center based in New York's Hudson Valley (www.highlandpassivehouse.com). Cathy's practical, how-to design advice can also be found in her book, "Home Design Recipes."

How can I prepare my home for holiday gatherings?

Angie Hicks
Ask Angi

The holidays have a way of sneaking up on us. Between shopping, cooking and corralling the kids for that perfect family photo, it's easy to let the small but important details slip through the cracks.

Preparing your home for holiday gatherings isn't just about sprucing things up, but rather making sure you've covered the bases so you can enjoy the season with less stress and more good cheer.

Start with your décor. Before you go full-on Clark Griswold with the lights, take stock of what you already have. Pull out all the bins, untangle the light strands and give everything a once-over. Toss or donate anything that's broken or past its prime, and make a shopping list before you head out. A quick refresh on linens and a holiday playlist can go a long way toward setting the right mood, and if you're pressed for time, a local organizer can help you whip your seasonal stash into shape.

Once the decorations are sorted, it's time to tackle the clutter. The holiday season doubles as a perfect excuse to clear out the extra stuff you don't need. Set up bins to sort into keep, toss and donate piles, and work through the house room by room. Focus on kitchens, bathrooms, guest areas and entryways, since these are the spaces most people will see. Scrub bathrooms, vacuum the living room and give the kitchen a good once-over, including appliances you haven't cleaned in a while. If the thought of deep-cleaning the whole house before guests arrive fills you with dread, hiring a local cleaning service may be the best gift you give yourself this year.

Dreamstime / TNS

The season for holiday gatherings is closer than you think!

Next, think about the table. Most households have enough dishes, cutlery and glasses for everyday life, but the holidays tend to bring a bigger crowd. Take stock early. Polish the silver, wash the fancy drinkware, and pull out enough chairs for your guest list (plus a few extras for surprise visitors). If you're short on place settings, it's better to borrow or buy now rather than scramble on the day of.

Your kitchen and pantry deserve a checkup before the festivities. Few things put a damper on baking day like realizing you're out of sugar halfway through. Check expiration dates on spices, baking supplies and canned goods. Stock up on staples like coffee, chips and beverages. Take the opportunity to purge freezer-burned or forgotten items to make room for the turkey, ham or roasts you've ordered ahead. While you're at it, wipe down the microwave, clean the oven, and restock parchment paper, foil and plastic wrap.

Don't overlook security in your prep list. Make sure doors and windows are in good condition, locks work properly and outdoor lighting is functional. If you're expecting packages, plan to be home when they arrive or consider a smart doorbell to keep an eye on deliveries. A little attention now can prevent unwanted surprises later.

If your holiday plans involve overnight guests, now's the time to get those rooms in shape. Fresh linens on the bed, a tidy guest bathroom stocked with towels and toiletries, and a quick check-in on any dietary or pet allergies will help your guests feel comfortable.

Then, prepare for the influx of coats, boots and winter gear that comes with colder weather. Instead of piling everything on a bed, set aside space for outerwear. Hooks, coat racks, boot trays and mats can keep messes contained. A basket of holiday slippers or socks is a charming touch that also keeps floors clean.

Finally, don't forget about warmth. Cold weather is part of the holiday backdrop, but your guests should feel cozy. Change HVAC filters, test the fireplace, and make sure guest room vents are open. Stock up on wood or pellets if you burn them, and add throw blankets around the living spaces for comfort. If you haven't scheduled a chimney cleaning in a while, get it on the calendar. And while you're thinking about fire, check your fire extinguishers and take a few minutes to go over your family's escape plan, just in case.

Preparing your home for holiday gatherings is less about creating the picture-perfect scene and more about creating an environment where people can relax and enjoy themselves. With a little advance planning, you'll be ready to open your doors with confidence. And once the guests arrive, you can focus less on what you forgot and more on making the kind of holiday memories people will talk about for years.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

Photos by Jaclyn Cosgrove / Los Angeles Times / TNS

On a hot day, it's important to stay hydrated, including on hikes that lack shade, like this one in Griffith Park.

TRAVEL TIPS

The *five most common* hiking emergencies and how to prevent them

By JACLYN COSGROVE
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Among my many memories of hiking around Southern California, I have a few that haunt me.

The time I got briefly lost around Mt. Waterman, where I'd been several times. When I ran out of water hiking Strawberry Peak on an unseasonably hot day. When I was dressed appropriately for a long day hike until I fell into the river and was uncomfortably cold for the rest of the day. When I thought I was on trail only to realize I was kind of stuck on a steep, unstable hillside.

Each time, I was underprepared. Each bad experience was preventable. That's the lesson of today's Wild.

I spoke to Dr. Rob Scanlon, author of the newly published "Surviving the Trail" (Falcon Guides), a guide book that lays out how we can prevent the most common hiking emergencies by slowing down and planning long before we hit the trail.

Scanlon said he sees his work as less of a "hiker safety" book and more of a "hiker empowerment" book.

"I'm hoping people will recognize that this is intrinsically a dangerous place to be," said Scanlon, who is board certified in internal medicine, pulmonology, critical care and sleep medicine. "Being a little bit anticipatory, and certainly concentrating on the simple things you can control, will really lead to an almost near guarantee that you will not end up the subject of a news headline."

I never want to write about any of you, dear Wilders, unless it's to amplify the great work you're doing in the outdoors. I do, however, want to help us all learn – through a thoughtful, not sensationalist, approach – how we can make the kinds of memories we enjoy reflecting on.

The subtitle to Scanlon's book is "Five Essential Skills to Prepare Every Hiker for Adventure's Most Common Perils." Let's dive into what those are.

Mish, a friend of The Wild, crosses a stream via logs on the Trail Canyon Falls hike.

1. Dehydration

Long before 7-Eleven, Buc-ee's and (as an Okie, I must mention) QuikTrip, humans had to actually plan for hydration. Today, if you're out and about and you're thirsty, there are generally "20 places you could stop within a rock-throwing distance where you could grab something to drink," Scanlon said. "We're more acting in real-time in our off-trail lives, not anticipatory like it used to be."

This mindset can lead to a lack of planning around hydration. And it shows in the data, as Scanlon notes in his book. "Thousands of hikers" require rescue every year because of issues around dehydration, he wrote.

In his book, Scanlon outlines not only how to determine whether you're dehydrated on the trail but also, arguably more important, how to plan out your fluid needs. The key factors for determining how much water you should pack are: how fast you'll be hiking, the terrain you're traversing, the temperatures you'll encounter and how humid it'll be.

Scanlon outlines this in a handy chart, which I used to determine I'm generally bringing enough water: about 32 ounces an hour, given I'm going about 2.5 mph, gaining between 1,200- and 2,000-feet elevation and hiking in moderate temperatures.

"I try to stress strategy. Stopping at the local gas station on the way to the trailhead and grabbing a 12- or 16-ounce bottle of [water] is not a strategy," said Scanlon, who lives in Georgia. "The strategy begins before the hike."

2. Perilous weather

As we head into colder temperatures here in Southern California – we just got snow in our mountains! – it is crucial to layer appropriately, including with the right materials.

Any hiker has experienced the phenomenon of bundling up at the car and then needing to shed at least one layer at the start of the hike. Scanlon said as we move and generate heat, we need to either shed or open layers, aiming to maintain feeling a little on the cool side.

My favorite cool-weather layering approach is a merino wool base layer with a puffer vest on top. Sometimes I add gloves, but it really depends on the wind temperature. I often wear either fleece-lined hiking pants, especially if I will be around snow, or thick leggings. And I almost always have on these socks, which all my friends are tired of hearing about. In my pack, I carry extra socks and another base layer that I often change into at my destination. I also like to have my rain jacket (with pit vents!) in case it's windy at the summit.

All of this is informed by one basic thing I do before hiking: I extensively check the weather, which is not always a straight-forward process.

"Most only look at the weather forecast before traveling, but it often changes as hike time approaches and may not apply to whether the hike will actually take place," Scanlon wrote. "Forecasts often pertain to the conditions in the nearest city center or local airport and not necessarily those in the hiking areas and surrounding mountains."

Scanlon outlines great resources to be better prepared for mountain conditions, including this website: https://www.mountain-forecast.com/.

3. Crossing rivers and creeks

Drowning is the most common cause of death in national parks, including misunderstanding how to safely swim in or cross a river. Even the experts struggle with that, which emphasizes just how challenging – and dangerous – it can really be.

Scanlon told me about a five-day backpacking trip he took to the majestic Banff National Park. There was a man-made bridge over every creek crossing, except for one. The trail directed Scanlon and his friends to cross a wide, swift, deep river, and despite scouting other options, they found there was no good spot to cross elsewhere.

At first, Scanlon felt safe, knowing how to cross a river, including facing upstream, leaning into the oncoming water flow and shuffling slowly, moving through stable sidesteps.

But as he entered the outside curve, which he knew would be the fastest and deepest part, he was in water almost to his hips, "which is the no-go zone."

"But I was almost there, and I got pretty close to getting toppled over, but I leaned into the oncoming water extra hard to counterbalance it and somehow got through," he said. "Even when you do it right, you can still have issues, but I think the majority of times it's not knowing the technique, not knowing where it's best to cross and maybe the hubris factor."

4. Falling from high places

People are increasingly getting too bold in high places, especially in the name of selfies and social media posts, Scanlon said.

The way to get ahead of this problem on your own journey is to decide yourself and within your group that you will not let the glory ahead of you influence your behavior.

I did similar on a recent trip to Taft Point, where multiple travelers have fallen to their deaths. I'd seen the gorgeous images of hikers sitting or posing on a rock that juts out dramatically over Yosemite Valley, and I'd told myself, "Maybe not." Instead, my dear friend Patrick captured my image safely from a lookout point (which, per optical illusion, looks like I'm much closer to the edge than I am).

It can be hard to fight against this FOMO, but going beyond safety rails or going off-trail for better views or trying to impress our friends can all lead to deadly outcomes.

"There are certainly people who've fallen from unstable ground beneath them, and that you can't necessarily prepare for," Scanlon said. "But the majority of [accidents] are bad behaviors, like poorly executed selfies and [people] doing things they really shouldn't. We should not be doing our first handstand ever on an 800-foot cliff."

5. Getting lost

This is arguably both the most important chapter (Skill 5: Land Navigation) of Scanlon's book and the most important thing you can understand outside of hydrating appropriately.

Because, as Scanlon pointed out to me, understanding the factors around how we get lost "is extraordinarily important to nail down because getting lost is the gateway to the other perils."

So, how do we not get lost?

In an estimated 40 percent of cases, a hiker got lost because they wondered off-trail, Scanlon wrote. This could be because they accidentally followed a spur or game trail, thinking it was the true trail. Another 17 percent of cases involve bad weather striking, and hikers moving off-trail to seek shelter.

Scanlon goes into extensive detail – just over 100 pages – about how to navigate in the wilderness, including how to use the different types of compasses, understanding the different parts of the compass and more.

One of his suggestions is easy enough to follow: "Before venturing out on any day hike or backpacking trip, study the map ahead of time and identify the nearest safety point," whether that be a nearby road, railway, local airport or nearby town. Whatever you choose, it should hold the highest potential for seeing other people who can help and have the fewest visible obstacles on the map to arrive there.

"Navigating to this safety point will be our fallback plan when we have become lost and all else fails to get us back to the trail or trailhead," Scanlon wrote.

■■■

I hope you can take this knowledge and apply it to your next hike. I know I will (and probably also pack Scanlon's book in my backpack), along with carrying this mindset with me on the trail:

"The No. 1 goal is everyone gets home in one piece, and the secondary goal to get to the summit" or wherever you're headed, Scanlon told me. "As long as you start out with the predetermined goal that everybody gets home, I think everything you prepare for and every on-trail decision you make should be serving that goal."

Shae Mcmaster / Dreamstime / TNS

Haunted hotels have always fascinated those drawn to the strange and the macabre. Why are so many drawn to these haunted spooky places?

Most-haunted hotels in the U.S.

By NOREEN KOMPANIK
TravelPulse (TNS)

Danny Raustadt / Dreamstime / TNS

Staircase going up to the back of the Crescent Hotel. The famously haunted Crescent Hotel in Eureka Springs Arkansas.

Writer and poet Carl Sandburg once said, "And the dead know much, and the dead holder under their tongues, a locked-up story."

Haunted hotels have always fascinated those drawn to the strange and the macabre. Why are so many drawn to these haunted spooky places?

Many of these hotels offer a rich history, contributing to their charm and allure. Add stories of famous guests, tragic events or paranormal occurrences, and for curiosity seekers and those searching for a possible supernatural experience, here are some great places to explore. And many offer ghost tours of their own properties.

Copper Queen Hotel, Bisbee, AZ

The historic hotel in Bisbee is Arizona's longest continuously operating hotel, once serving as lodging for investors and dignitaries visiting its successful copper mine.

Built over a century ago, the grand dame of Bisbee has hosted Theodore Roosevelt, John Wayne and General John "Black Jack" Pershing. The hotel also hosts three resident ghosts that include Julia Lowell, a "lady of the evening," a young boy named Billy who drowned in a nearby river, and a bearded man with a top hat. A journal at the front desk contains descriptions of guests' encounters.

Hotel del Coronado, San Diego, CA

Built in 1887, the red-turreted Victorian architectural masterpiece has hosted numerous U.S. presidents, foreign dignitaries, royalty and celebrities. Several Hollywood movies were filmed here, and L. Frank Baum, writer and creator of the famous Wizard of Oz did much of his work during his stay.

The hotel also welcomed a beautiful young stranger in 1892 who checked in but never checked out. On a late November evening, the troubled, melancholy Kate Morgan, was seen dressed in black facing crashing ocean waves fueled by a cold winter storm. The following morning, she was found on a staircase leading to beach with a gun next to her body.

Over the years, in a third-floor guestroom (3327) where the woman stayed, guests have reported a number of strange and eerie occurrences. Others described sightings of a woman dressed in black wandering hallways, gardens and along the seashore.

La Fonda on the Plaza, Santa Fe, NM

Designated as the oldest hotel corner in America, La Fonda on the Plaza was constructed as a Spanish inn in 1607. The lobby, common areas and historic guest rooms and suites feature authentic New Mexican craftsmanship in an impressive luxurious but laid-back setting.

Many legends and reports say the hotel is haunted by the spirit of Judge John P. Slough often seen in a long black coat wandering the interior of the hotel. Slough was shot and killed in the lobby in 1867. Additionally, the spirit of a distressed salesman who gambled away his money then jumped (or fell) into a well once located in the hotel's La Plazuela restaurant has been reported. Other legends tell of a young bride murdered on her wedding night by an ex-lover who is said to appear in room 510, in elevators and other places.

The Emily Morgan Hotel, San Antonio, TX

Situated in the heart of downtown San Antonio across from the Alamo, the hotel was once a 1920s medical facility with surgery rooms, psychiatric wards, a morgue and crematorium. The 7 th, 9 th,11 th and 14 th floors are said to foster the most haunting stories – a ghost bride and screams on the 7 th floor once a psychiatric ward, doctor and nurse apparitions on the 12 th floor and hospital smells and strange odors on the 14 th.

Other phenomena include cold spots, shadows, a feeling of being watched, sounds of gurneys, and elevators stopping at certain floors at will.

The Stanley Hotel-Estes Park, CO

Considered one of the most famous haunted hotels in the U.S. thanks to its lore and role in inspiring Stephen's King's "The Shining," The Stanley Hotel was opened in 1909.

Stephen King and his wife stayed in room 217, just as the hotel was closing for the winter. King is said to have had nightmares that night – his son running through endless hallways, pursued by a malevolent presence – inspiring the plot of the famous movie.

Over the years, guests have reported hearing piano music coming from empty rooms or hallways, cold spots, doors that move by themselves, ghostly children, shadowy figures, and more.

The Crescent Hotel, Eureka Springs, AR

Paranormal experts have deemed this historic hotel one of the most haunted places in the U.S. – not quite the ideal place to stay for the faint of heart.

The 1886 hotel was once an experimental hospital set up by infamous charlatan Norman Baker. Baker claimed to have the cure for cancer, his treatments later deemed fraudulent. Because of its unfortunate history, many patient deaths occurred, and many unsettled spirits still haunt The Crescent Hotel.

Guests report nurses walking through the halls pushing wheelchairs, dark figures, cold spots, smells like cherry tobacco without a source, flickering lights and visitors feeling ill in certain areas of the hotel such as the old hospital wings and the morgue (now the site of the spa).

The Myrtles Plantation, St. Francisville, LA

Located in the Baton Rouge area of Louisiana, the plantation, originally called Laurel Grove built in 1798 has quite a history accompanied by an impressive collection of ghostly lore. Considered one of the finest hotels in America, the venue has no issue also deeming itself the "Home of Mystery and Intrigue."

Likely the best-known ghost legend surrounds a slave/servant named Chloe whose ear was cut off as punishment for eavesdropping. Chloe then baked a cake poisoned with oleander leaves killing the owner's wife and some children. She was hanged; her body thrown in the river and is often spotted wearing a green turban to hide her missing ear.

Other strange incidents include handprints appearing on an old mirror, footsteps coming up the stairs, ghosts of Mrs. Woodruff and her children, strange orbs and scents of oleander and cold spots. None of this surprising given the plantation is said to be built atop a Tunica Indian burial ground.

The Queen Mary Hotel, Long Beach, CA

The former retired ocean liner, now a hotel reportedly has so many haunted areas, paranormal experts never run out of spaces to explore. Stateroom B340 is considered the most notorious room where guests have reported lights and faucets turning on and off by themselves, doors slamming, dark figures lurking at the foot of the bed, knocking sounds and sheets being pulled off at night.

Other ghostly incidents include "Jackie," a little girl haunting the pool area in which she drowned, John Peddar/Pedder, a crew member crushed by a watertight drill often seen in the engine room, apparitions of a lady in white, phantom music, unexplained laughter and more.

Marshall House, Savannah, GA

Deemed one of the oldest hotels in Savannah, the Marshall House dating back to 1851, functioned as a hospital for Union soldiers during the Civil War, and later through two yellow fever epidemics in the mid-1800s.

Room 414 is frequently cited as one of the most haunted rooms with stories that include foul smells (rotting, decay odors). Other unexplained occurrences include phantom children running, laughing and bouncing marbles down hallways in the middle of the night, faucets turning off and on by themselves, sightings of a ghostly Union soldier missing an arm, and shadowy figures resembling doctors and nurses.

Bourbon Orleans Hotel, New Orleans, LA

This iconic New Orleans hotel previous served as a theater, an orphanage and school and a medical ward during the yellow fever epidemics, with a storied history dating back to 1817.

Reported hauntings and supernatural phenomena associated with the venue include an apparition of a lady dancing alone under the chandeliers in the Orleans Ballroom, children laughing and crying along with spirit appearances, and the feeling of small hands tugging on guest's clothing in the corridors.

Room 644, The Nun's Room is cited as one of the most haunted rooms in the hotel due to a nun committing suicide here. Guests have heard screams, and some have reported actually seeing a ghostly nun standing beside their bed.